



わたしはふたつめの人生をある〜！

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小沢出新都

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I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 1

She was sipping now-cold soup in a relatively small villa despite the excessive size of the royal palace. The Head Chef in this villa— —'Head' by merit of being the only chef— —had just begged to resign. It was roughly at this moment that Fii truly realised it; her life was more-or-less over.

Outside, fireworks filled the skies, and the cries of celebration from the citizens reached even this lonely corner.

It seemed to be quite the festivity.

And rightfully so. Because today was the wedding day of King Roy of Orstoll, and Princess Fiiru of Déman.

King Roy was a man known for his shrewdness and political ability, capable of competing against the wily old kings of the other nations despite his youth. Additionally, he was famed as unparalleled in war, and was extolled as a Hero King who brought further prosperity to the already great Kingdom of Orstoll.

As though that were not enough, his looks and elegance were the desire of countless princesses, and yet there had been no mention of any romance. This was the only thing that the citizens of Orstoll were worried about.

His treatment of women was incredibly cold, and so he was nicknamed the Ice King.

And yet, a princess of a rural nation she might have been, King Roy had finally found a bride in her. Naturally everybody was excited.

Moreover, it was not some marriage forced onto him by worried retainers, nor was it some unwilling marriage born from his duties as a king; the man himself had declared that he wanted to marry Princess Fiiru.

Little wonder that this was cause for fireworks.

The bright fireworks filled the starry sky with absurd numbers. As Fii watched from the window, she noted that the cacophony sounded more like the roars of a bomb. This had definitely gone beyond the level you would use for celebration, she mused to herself...

Incidentally, though Fiiru was merely the princess of a weak, rural nation, she was known for her great potential, with both looks and wits, grace unthinkable from the princess of a minor country, as well as a mysterious healing power as a miko.

The perfect bride, one could say.

Which was why a painting of the married couple smiling together was now flying through the sky. Was this one of the few airships that the Kingdom of Orstoll was said to possess? It was Fii's first time seeing it.

At any rate, it was a noisy day, filled with celebration.

As an extra, although nobody likely cared, it was also Fii's wedding day with Roy. And though people cared even less, Fii was also a princess of Déman. She was Fiiru's elder twin, after all.

So why, while one bride was met with cheers from across the nation, was the other sitting in the corner of a lonely villa, drinking unheated, pre-made soup? Why had the Head Chef responsible asked, "I'd like to quit my job..." and why had her reply been "Sure"?

Though it was just an insignificant matter, one that nobody likely cared nor had any interest in hearing about, there were a few little circumstances behind this.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 2

To begin with, King Roy's proposal was frankly a bolt out of the blue for the people of Déman.

Certainly, Fiiru was popular. She was cute, her personality was great, her head was good, so well, of course she would be popular. The princes from the surrounding countries were all head over heels for her.

But even so, she was just the princess of a weak rural nation. Putting it kindly, the people of Déman thought that if she did well for herself, she might be able to marry into one of the more powerful nations in the region. But the truth was that these were nothing more than needlessly large frontier nations with nothing else to boast of.

In contrast, the Kingdom of Orstoll was in the dead centre of world politics. To win over its King was just incredible.

"By all means, I would like Fiiru as my Queen."

When the letter came, their father the King got incredibly carried away. Of all things, he made demands of a King from a much greater nation.

"We feel great joy and honour that you would have Fiiru as your Queen. However, Fiiru is incredibly popular, you see. Honestly, there are just so many marriage applications that we don't know what to do with them! And so, you see, marrying her to you doesn't present us with, well, many merits. You see?"

An example of the worst stereotypes of a tiny King from a tiny country, their father demanded mining rights and jewels, and not only that, he even outright demanded money.

"Insolent!" is what anybody would have expected King Roy to say, but instead he readily agreed.

And unlike everybody else who felt relief, the father of the twins was flustered

instead.

‘Couldn’t I have demanded even more?’ he wondered. An idea truly befitting of trash.

But now that he had already made demands once, there was no pretext for a second demand. Even he lacked the gall to make baseless demands. After all, Orstoll was so great a nation that it could crush Déman with a single glare.

And so, the excuse he came up with was...

“If Fiiru is to become a bride, you must take Fii as well.”

Certainly, amongst political marriages, it wouldn’t be strange for one nation to present two brides for the sake of strengthening bonds. To put it crudely, one was a spare in-case something went wrong with the other.

But it was a custom that very rarely saw practice.

Why then would the King bring it up now?

The first reason was that Fii was devastatingly unpopular.

She was a princess of a tiny nation, which meant that very few benefits came with her marriage. As long as some prince didn’t fall for her charms as a woman, a marriage proposal would never come.

(In other words, my value as a princess is about as much as a Zimbabwean dollar...)

And as for what the King’s aim in all this was...

“You will be marrying our nation’s few, precious princesses. If possible, a little bit of betrothal money would be much appreciated.”

While forcing another bride onto the groom, the Déman King shamelessly asked for more things. And yet King Roy readily assented.

Just how madly in love was he?

With 10 times the market price for each princess, plus some extra as well, the Déman King was finally satisfied, holding his nose his in pride.

Just the very next day though, Fii had snapped and kneed the King in that exact nose.

The guards and rural knights held her down, bound her, and ended up sending her straight to Orstoll.

And when she had arrived, she was treated exactly as one would treat luggage. After being thrown into some corner of the royal palace, she spent every single day up until her marriage there. Which leads us to this moment.

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Incidentally, you may perhaps be thinking that Fii and Fiiru's names are confusing and easily mistaken, so let us talk about that.

It all began while the twins were still sleeping within their mother.

When the King of Déman realised that they were twins, he decided on two names beforehand.

Eventually the time of their birth had arrived.

At first, a crying baby girl came out. When the midwife handed the infant to the King, with a solemn expression, he spoke thusly:

“Though we are a small, rural nation, you are still a proper lady, as well as the first princess of Déman. I bestow upon you a name worthy of that station. Your name shall be Fii——”

It was at that moment that the second infant appeared.

Unlike the first girl, she was silent upon her birth, and yet mysteriously, all eyes in the room were drawn to her.

“Oh... OHHH! This child...”

Upon seeing her, a cry of wonder escaped his lips.

“Never before have I seen such a beautiful baby child! And what is this wondrous light that envelops her. She must be a miracle child! There is no mistake! I must bestow on you a name worthy of your station. It is decided. Your name shall be Fiiru! It is a name passed down in our family history, reserved only for the most noble of women!”

After that, both the King and Queen were entranced by Fiiru's beauty, her

wisdom despite her age, and the noble atmosphere that enveloped her. Because of that, they completely forgot about the first girl for almost six months. The maids took proper care of her of course, so there was no risk to her life, but it was far too late for the King to give her a proper name.

At any rate, the secretary present at her birth decided on the King's half-uttered name as a stopgap name for the record book, and so the older girl's name became Fii.

Incidentally, there was originally another name prepared for the Second Princess, but because of how moved the King was at Fiiru's birth, he had completely forgotten it.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 3

An unwanted princess sold as a set along with the princess they actually wanted.

Naturally she met terrible reception.

No sooner had she arrived in the capital had they shut her up in an aged villa in one of the corners of the palace. There, she spent her days until the wedding without meeting anybody in particular.

It felt as though her treatment became worse by the day. Even the guards supposed to be watching the villa entrance grew more and more lax in their job, and the world seemed to ignore her, like something unpleasant they locked in a box to forget.

To cite a specific example, the guard shift was supposed to happen at lunch. The problem though, was that nobody came to replace them. And despite that fact, the two guards would still leave without a care. What's more, at night there would never be anybody there.

Because they were sleeping.

Each day, the two of them would eat their fill at lunch, have a break afterwards, and then enjoy a good sleep when night fell.

What kind of look-outs were they supposed to be. In fact, you could say the only one who had been doing any looking these last few days was Fii, as she watched these ridiculous guards.

Naturally, Orstoll provided her no maids. And the maids that came with her from Déman were all assigned to Fiiru.

It would be determined which of them would become the attendants to the Orstollian Queen very soon. As far as the maid profession went, it was essentially the summit. There was no time for them to waste on the princess who had been forced on Orstoll as an extra.

You could kind of say that one of the kitchenhands from Déman had followed Fii, but his aim was different.

The Capital of Orstoll, Wienne, was the centre of many things, and the culinary world was one of them.

It was said that Wienne had 50,000 chefs training and working there.

If he followed Fii then he could move there for free. After that he could just get Fii to fire him, and he'd be a free man in Wienne.

No, far from just free, he would be 'the poor chef who was fired in a foreign land by the selfish princess'. It could even help him get a job.

And so with that in mind, for three days straight, he would bring Fii nothing but unheated soup, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Fii too had realised it, but irritated at being treated like a horse that he rode for free, she stuck to it and drank all the soup provided until he asked to quit just a moment ago.

"Umm, ermm, well... you see... I'd like... to quit..."

"Go ahead."

Seeing his struggle to say just those words, Fii really wondered if he would be able to make it on his own in this capital city. It wasn't related to her at all, but even she was starting to feel nervous.

At any rate, now that the farce was over, Fii was left alone in the villa. While drinking up her cold, and obviously left-over soup, she stared out the window of the lonely building.

"Aahh~ Because of my father's ridiculous request, I wonder if the rest of my life has gone to waste. I'm married to a husband I'll never see, and I might spend the next few decades alone here until I die huh..."

The guards were obviously placed here to look in, and not out. In other words, they were here to watch Fii.

(In other words, they're telling me not to leave here, right? Geez, it looks like that Ice King or whatever has no intentions of letting me out... What an empty life it's going to be.)

For a moment her rage flared up against the husband whose face she had never seen, but even that started to feel empty, so she simply collapsed onto her

bed.

(If only I could abandon this life...)

She considered sleeping, but it was still as noisy as ever outside, so it was impossible to sleep.

(No matter how happy they are, they're clearly partying too late, right...?)

Fii might have been the only person in this entire nation that was feeling rock bottom today.

It was at that moment that the idea of talking a stroll appeared.

After all, there was nobody standing guard at night.

The King probably wanted her to stay indoors too, but it was his responsibility for posting such stupid look-outs. There was no reason for Fii to be over-considerate.

Having said that though, things would turn annoying if she was caught, so she decided to keep her stroll close to the walls surrounding the villa.

“So big... It's completely different from the castle back home...”

The garden around the villa was lush with plantlife she had never seen before, wet with the night dew; the moonlight and the distant fireworks together reflected for a beautiful view.

While she was having her quiet stroll, Fii found that she had stepped on some kind of paper.

“Mn? What's this?”

When she spread the paper to investigate under the bright moonlight, this was what she found written:

『Recruiting Apprentice Knights!

The Orstoll Knight Order is looking for new recruits!

Commoners! Nobles! Vagrants! Travellers!

Wandering warriors, we do not discriminate!

We are looking for able young talent!

The entrance exams begin soon!』

The moment she saw this, a lightbulb lit up in her mind.

“This is it!” she exclaimed, holding the paper up high. “If I take this exam——”
——I can live another life.

Foreigners, and even people with unknown backgrounds could apply, and if she succeeded in becoming a knight then she would be granted citizenship here. In other words, Fii could gain a completely new name and identity, separate from the one as the unwanted consort, the unwanted Second Queen.

After all, nobody would be coming to her villa anyway, and almost nobody knew her face to begin with.

Frankly speaking, Fii and Fiiru looked completely different.
So even if she suddenly disappeared, there wouldn’t be any issues!

If she could escape this place and live a new life as a knight... if she could succeed in joining, then she could say goodbye to this fruitless life forever.

Fii hurriedly checked the date of the exam.

“Two more weeks... There really isn’t much time.”

The exam would be happening soon.

Strictly speaking, she had some knowledge of the sword. As a child she looked up to knights, and was able to take lessons. Because her parents were too busy fussing over her sister, neither of them remonstrated her.

Eventually though, she became of age, and it would affect their reputation if they couldn’t marry her off, so they finally found it a problem and stopped her lessons. Even so, she could remember the basics.

(In these two weeks, I have to get my sense for the sword back!)

With that thought in mind, Fii hurried back towards the villa.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 4

Two weeks later, Fii found herself looking at the Apprentice Knight Exam's huge line.

(There's soo many people. I'd better line up soon...)

The queue went from beyond a nearby gate, all the way into the castle.

Early this morning, Fii snuck out of the villa before the guards normally woke up, and hid herself inside the castle.

It was for the sake of taking the exam.

And so as to avoid being spotted by the people of the castle, she snuck along the outer walls, and made it all the way to the location of the exam.

Fii wanted to line up like everybody else coming from beyond the castle, but she had actually come from the other direction.

Because of that, she had to quickly sneak out and reach the end of the line.

These last two weeks Fii had swung her sword, day and night.

She was all on her own, so there was nothing else she could do to improve. But she was confident that she had done everything she could have.

Honestly speaking, her body wasn't in good shape.

It was because she hadn't been able to eat properly.

Ever since she had come to this country, Fii had evolved from being treated like air, to being treated like a parasite.

Besides food and daily needs, she had been granted nothing else.

Well, thinking about it though, that much was natural.

To the people of this nation, Fii had both hijacked her younger twin's romance and demanded a free ride into a wedding with a powerful groom. What's more, she was merely a princess from a small nation, that normally no one in Orstoll would have given a second thought to.

Who would willingly look after a woman like that?

If she asked, they would probably curtly give her the minimum, but that kind of attitude couldn't be helped.

Since coming to this nation, Fii had only been given lazy guards, and a villa that had likely been used as a storehouse before her arrival.

Because of that, the ingredients for her food thus far had been bought by the Head Chef using her own money.

He had probably bought them from merchants visiting the castle.

Her food had been nothing but cooled soup and unappetising bread though...

And now that the Head Chef had resigned, there was nobody to leave the villa to buy ingredients for her.

Even Fii was worried when she first noticed this.

But there was nothing she could do about it.

It wouldn't have done for her to ask the guards for help.

She was going to grab hold of another life soon. In order for her to succeed in doing so, the less people who knew her face, the better.

Because of that, Fii spent the last two weeks carefully rationing out the remaining ingredients.

Sadly, despite being in one of the most prosperous nations in the world, and inside its Royal Castle, for some reason Fii was faced with a sudden survivalist challenge. Life could truly be ridiculous sometimes.

At any rate, her rations had run out two days prior, meaning that Fii had spent the last two days without eating anything.

All while continuing her sword swinging regimen.

(This might be my only chance like this.)

Today held the critical moment that would decide if Fii would be able to live as another person.

There was no failing now.

Fii was still inside the castle.

Her immediate goal was to cross the walls, and then line up in the queue.

This was the first challenge of her day.

While Fii was keeping a low profile in her search for a way to leave, a voice suddenly called out from behind.

“Oiii, the cute little miss over there. Are you lost?”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 5

(Crap!? Is this it!?)

The moment that she heard the word 'miss', Fii's heart skipped a beat. Her forehead was starting to run with a cold sweat.

As for why, it's because Fii was presently dressed as a man. Earlier, Fii had cut her hair short with scissors that had been given as part of Déman's wedding gift to her. She was also wearing ragged gardeners clothes that she had found in one of the villa's storage rooms.

Her plan had been to take the exam as a man.

Although there wasn't any rules against the sex of the applicants, she wanted to do everything she could to improve her chances. And a boy would probably get in more easily than a woman. It was a simple reason, but a compelling one.

After all, this was something that would determine Fii's fate.

(What do I do... Can I get out of this somehow...?) Things would still be better if they only realised she was a woman.

But if they found her suspicious for loitering around here and decided to investigate, they might even realise that she was the parasite Second Queen and throw her back into the villa.

And she doubted that her new guards would be as lazy as the last ones.

(At any rate, I have to smooth this over.)

She needed information.

Just how sure was he that she was a woman? And was there anything else he suspected her of?

"U-, Umm, err, I'm-"

Turning around, she was met with a hazel-eyed blonde knight. Tall and with a handsome face, he seemed like he would be popular amongst women.

And what's more...

(He seems kinda frivolous somehow.)

This was the impression that he gave her.

And for some reason he was smiling in amusement as he watched her.

"My bad, my bad. You don't have to look so surprised. You just had such a cute and girly face, that I couldn't help but tease you. So what's up, kid? You lost?"

Hearing his explanation, Fii sighed in relief. It seemed he had just been teasing her.

"Um, I was trying to line up but..."

"Aah, could it be that you got pushed out of the queue? You're pretty small after all."

"Y-, Yes! That's exactly right!"

She hadn't actually been in the queue, but his misunderstanding was convenient so she went along with it.

"Sorry, but you don't have a choice except to line up again. I'll guide you to the end, okay?" said the knight with a grin.

It was a handsome smile, and had the maids from Déman seen it, they would probably have flushed red and fainted.

But to Fii, she was more interested in the fact that he would be escorting her to the end.

(With this I can escape without suspicion and line up for the test!) What a lucky accident.

"Hey, make way! We're trying to get through here, and I don't wanna touch huge dudes like you lot. Touching should be done with cute girls, laying naked in my bed."

With that, the chaotic line of applicants began splitting apart to form a path

for them.

(He really is just as frivolous as he looks...)

His words just now had confirmed her first impression of him.

When the path through the line was finally opened, the knight turned around and beckoned Fii over with a smile.

“C’mon kid, let’s go.”

“Yes!”

(But he’s a surprisingly good person, isn’t he.) With a smile, Fii chased after him.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 6

Being led along by the somewhat frivolous, but kind knight, Fii finally managed to pass the castle gates.

"I'm Crow. I guess you already know, but I'm a knight of Orstoll. So what do I call you?"

"My name is Heath," casually replied Fii.

She had properly thought up an alias over these last two weeks.

(No. It's not an alias. It's going to be my new name.) To be honest she had wanted to try a completely new name, but it wouldn't do if she couldn't react to the name properly.

The 'hea' in Heath sounded a little bit like 'Fii', so she chose that as her name.

Even after passing through the castle gates, the line of applicants still continued on.

Fii felt that she would be fine on her own now that she was outside, but it seemed that Crow intended on escorting her all the way to the end. They continued to walk side-by-side.

"So why do you want to become a knight, Heath?"

"Umm, well..."

The question sent her into a panic.

Her goal was so clear that she had actually forgotten to form an excuse to use in public.

And it was impossible for her to honestly tell him that she wanted a new identity. In a fluster, what she managed to come up with was,

"B-, Because knights are cool!"

Quite a stupid reason, if she did say so herself.

She could feel sweat forming at her brow again.

But Crow's reaction was actually positive.

"Yeah, you're right. Knights are cool, aren't they. I'm cool too, right?"

"Yes! I admire you!"

She was sucking up to him a little bit, but it was true that she did find him cool. With his handsome looks and golden hair, together with his slim but built body, he looked terribly cool in his armour with the sword at his waist.

In the past, Fii too had wanted to become a knight. But she grew older, and the more she was shouldered with the burdens of a woman and a princess, the more she had forgotten this dream.

And Crow's appearance was exactly the image of knights that Fii had once admired.

"Yep, yep. I knew it. Knights are awesome, right? We're popular with women too. If you manage to become a knight as well, girls are gunna start flocking to ya. You'll find yourself a few girlfriends too!"

"I don't need that sort of thing..."

(He really is frivolous... Even though he looks so cool on the outside...) Fii glared at him a little coldly.

Seeing her response, Crow just laughed.

"Hahaha, you're still such a little kid. By the way, I can't say I'm familiar with your accent. Where you from?"

Having her accent pointed out to her, Fii went stiff.

She had spent two weeks coming up with her new identity. But being told that she had an accent, Fii suddenly lost a lot of confidence in it. This knight knew a lot more about Orstoll than she did. She never knew when she might say something that sounded suspicious to him.

Fii couldn't think of any way to explain it.

"Ummm... Ermm... You see..."

"Ahh, so it's something you didn't wanna talk about, huh. Then don't worry about it. Sorry 'bout that."

Surprisingly, Crow had very simply dropped the subject after seeing her unrest.

(I guess this kid is an illegal immigrant... His clothes are pretty worn out too...) thought Crow.

It wasn't uncommon for children like that to aim to become a knight, in order to improve their own lifestyle.

Honestly speaking, illegal immigrants would normally be cracked down on, but so long as they weren't criminals, the knights would generally overlook them. And far from turning them away, the apprentice knight exams were open to them as well.

By giving these people a chance, rather than cornering them with a crackdown, it would encourage them to exert themselves in the right way. It was a policy that the King of Orstoll, Roy, had come up with.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 7

While heading to the end at Crow's side, a pleasant scent tickled Fii's nose. It was definitely a food stall.

And Fii suddenly recalled that she was hungry.

(Auu, I'm sooo hungryy...)

But it wouldn't do to buy food now.

She had money, but it wasn't the currency being used in this nation.

They were made from precious metals so if you weighed them, you could easily convert the value.

But a boy going shopping with money from another nation would draw eyes whether he wanted to or not.

(Bear with it... Bear with it...)

Fii desperately ignored the food cart as she made her way past it.

"What's up?"

"Nothing at all."

She couldn't rouse Crow's suspicion any further.

She tried glossing over it.

Crow stared hard at her for a while.

"Wait here for a bit."

"Crow-san?"

He suddenly went off somewhere.

When Crow returned, in his hand were two skewers of grilled chicken.

He handed one to Fii.

"Here. Eat up."

“Eh, but...”

“You’re hungry, right? Don’t worry about it and eat. With your body like that, you’re not gunna pass the exam, yanno.”

A pleasant scent was drifting from the skewer in her hand. Fii looked up at Crow entreatingly, and he responded with a nod, so she opened her mouth and took a bit.

The taste of the first meat in weeks spread through her mouth.

(It’s yummy! It’s so yummyy...!)

She couldn’t stop at one bite. Forgetting any manners as a princess, she frantically gulped down the chicken.

“Haha, don’t rush. You’ll choke, yanno. C’mon, it’s nothing to cry about, right?”

Crow’s words made her notice the tears dripping from her face as she ate the chicken.

Since coming to his country, the people here had all ignored her. Nobody would give her the time of day, and she spent weeks locked up in the villa, given nothing but loneliness...

Crow was the first one to give her kindness since she had come here. While eating the warm chicken, something even warmer filled her heart.

“Crow-san... Thank you very much...”

Because she couldn’t stop her tears, Fii thanked Crow instead. And though a little troubled, Crow smiled and said, “Like I said, stop crying already. Just letting you know, but even if a guy cries, nobody is gunna comfort him. We’re only supposed to comfort women when they cry in bed.”

“Yes!”

Although she was still crying, Fii nodded with a smile.

It made her want to give her all. If the knights had people like him, it would definitely be a good home. Was there any better place to start her new life?

She might even end up in the same unit as Crow.

Before long, the pair finally reached the end of the line.

“Thank you for everything, Crow-san.”

“Don’t worry about it. It’s part of my job,”

Though Crow said this, it was obvious that treating people to grilled chicken was not actually.

“Just to let you know, I’m not going to show you any favour in the exams. We do things fairly.”

“Yes, I understand.”

Seeing Crow’s expression turn a little more serious now, Fii nodded in reply. It was natural.

The length of the queue spoke of how many applicants there were. If just being a little close to a knight meant that you would be treated specially, the exam would never last.

With this many hopefuls, it would definitely be stiff competition. Was it possible for her to succeed...?

No, she had to succeed.

If she wanted to escape her life of rotting away in that villa as the Second Queen, she had no choice but to succeed as Heath.

Her expression had suddenly become strained, so Crow pat her on the shoulder. Looking up, she found him grinning roguishly at her.

“I won’t show you any favour, but I’ll be rooting for you.”

What a joy to hear.

Fii who had been alone the whole time since coming here, had found herself somebody who would root for her.

“Yes! I’ll try my best!”

“Yeah! Go for it!”

After cheering her up, with a wave, Crow made his way back towards the castle.

(A knight... I want to become a knight...!) Compared to the time when she just wanted to quit being Second Queen, the feelings she held now were even stronger.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 8

Fii registered for the exam without a problem, and eventually the exam itself began.

The contents of the examination were one-versus-one duels between applicants.

The contenders were clashing swords in various locations, and people dressed as knights were observing them.

Crow was amongst them.

Eventually came time for Fii's name to be called.

Her opponent was a huge man who seemed three times her size.

After having her name checked by a knight, she entered into a ring made from wooden fences.

Seeing her enter, the man laughed at her mockingly.

"A brat that's probably still bald between the legs! This isn't a children's playground, aight? You're just gunna get hurt, so hurry back to your mama and ask for your milk."

"That kid really has no luck, hey? To think that he'd end up with Gorms in his first match."

"Yeah. That guy is one of the favourites for the examination."

From the voices around her, it seemed that everybody thought of her as unlucky...

But she had to succeed.

So she decided to stir up trouble in return.

"Huhh~? Who knew the gorillas in Orstoll were smart enough to talk! That's incredible! I'm honestly shocked. But anyway, why is a gorilla taking the apprentice knight exam? No matter how you think about it, a gorilla with hair all over his body can't possibly become a knight, right?"

Fii wasn't the type of girl to badmouth others of her own accord. When people were too unwelcoming she would sometimes become uncooperative, but at heart she was the nice kid that Crow had seen.

At the same time though, she was an outcast who had her own shadows within her heart, so she was rather acquainted with how to mock and badmouth others.

When she was small and overheard her personal maid badmouthing her behind her back, she really did want to cry. She still wasn't sure if this bitter experience of hers was helping her now or not, but at any rate, she had said what she said.

To her, this match was a once-in-a-lifetime turning point that would determine everything for her, and she was taking it seriously down to the darkest depths of her heart.

"Y-, YOU! You've got some guts, you fucker! When the match starts you'd better be prepared to have the snot beaten outta ya!"

"What are his nerves made of..."

"That kid really doesn't fear for his life..."

This much was natural. If she lost here, she was as good as dead anyway. Resolved to bet her entire life on this, Fii raised her wooden sword.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 9

Not long after the match began...

(It's even harder than I thought...)

Fii really began to feel this way.

Her opponent was certainly big and strong. But he probably wasn't very fast, so as long as she harrassed him, she might see an opening. That was what she had thought.

(I can't even attack him...)

It might sound like stating the obvious, but Fii's experience with swordfighting amounted to some paltry training as a child, and then two weeks of swinging a sword by herself. There was no way that she could match up to the skills of the other knight aspirants.

Without even a chance to swing her sword at him, all she could do was escape by the the skin of her teeth.

On the other hand, Gori- ...Gorms too, felt surprised at the outcome.

(Not only is this kid small, but he keeps moving around and I can't fucking hit him!) Gorms had thought that a brat like this would be beaten down in an instant, humiliated before the crowd.

But instead, five minutes had already passed, and yet she still evaded Gorms' attacks.

Fii's movements were unique.

Her small and soft body could curl up like a cat's, and as she leapt from strange positions, approached from unexpected directions, occasionally squatted on the ground or tumbled, Fii continued to evade the attacks.

(But this much still ain't a match for me...!) It's true that she was surprisingly good at dodging. But not even once had he been hit by her sword.

He could tell from her movements. That she was a novice when it came to swordplay.

If she didn't have the power to defeat him, then as long as he kept attacking, he would eventually win.

Gorms had complete confidence in his victory.

"Aahh... So it really did turn out one-sided in the end. Poor kid."

"But ain't his dodging damn amazing? Look at how much Gorms is attacking. I've never seen anyone hold out for this long, yanno."

"But if he can't attack then he can't win. At this rate, it's his loss the moment he runs out of stamina."

Perhaps because of the trash talk before their match, Fii and Gorms were now being watched by examinees with nothing better to do.

In truth, Fii's complexion was beginning to grow worse each time she evaded an attack.

Although she was relatively athletic for a princess, that was still only for a princess. She didn't have much stamina to begin with. Adding days of starvation on top of that simply worsened things.

(I have to... hold on... find a chance...) Although Fii told herself that, her body was getting heavier and heavier.

Her breathing was rough, and the sounds from her throat were growing raspy. Then, for just a moment, her feet tangled.

"Gotcha!"

Gorms' attack finally struck Fii.

She immediately defended with her wooden sword, but the overwhelming difference in strength sent her body flying through the air into the fence. The shock of the collision ran through her back, and for a few seconds she couldn't breathe.

Slipping down, she collapsed onto the ground.

(I have to... get up now...!)

She couldn't stand.

Her whole body was hurting.

Her ears were ringing.

(Even though I have to win here... I'm...) Resignation crept into the gap between her weakened mind and body.

(Even though this might be the only chance I have, I'm...) "Have you given up?"

At that moment, she heard a voice.

(Who...?)

Turning her head to the source of the voice, she found the face of a certain man.

"Are you ending things here?"

Standing in front of the fence was a man looking down at her. The blue grey eyes peering from beyond the mask on his face quietly regarded Fii.

It felt like the crowd had gotten noisier after he appeared.

Fii considered the question he had thrust at her.

(No...)

Her willpower seemed to be coming back to her.

"I'm not... done yet...!"

Her voice returned to her.
The sounds returned to her.

"Don't give up yet, Heath!"

She could hear the sound of Crow cheering for her.

"Ooh, looks like he's still going at it."

"But he's still laying down. He ain't gunna dodge the next attack like that."

It looked like Gorms was about to swing down with his sword. Her body still wasn't listening to her properly. At this rate, she would lose.

After considering her next move for an instant, Fii immediately took her next move.

"Here!"

The fingers of her right hand grasped at the gravel, and threw it at Gorms' face.

"WHA-!"

Gorms immediately defended against the unexpected attack, but a few rocks still managed to hit him in the eyelids.

"That kid threw dirt! So dirty!"

"Does he really want to be a knight!?"

Having found her opening, Fii slipped through Gorms' large legs on all fours, and fled to his blind spot.

"Kuh-! Where'd he go!?"

As Gorms sought Fii with his pained eyes, one of his feet floated before Fii's eyes.

Grabbing it, she ripped the boot off.

"Wha-!?"

With the boot in hand, Fii stood up and gained some distance from Gorms who was rolling about on the ground.

"He fucking stole his shoe!"

"The kid is a thief too!"

imouto

"You stole my shoe! So fucking dirty!"

"He he he."

Seeing Fii laughing like a villain with his shoe in hand, Gorms was just about to charge towards her, but he froze.

The examination grounds were covered with pebbles. Once you were used to it, the pain of having rocks in your soles was negligible, but even so, Gorms stopped for a moment. And because only one foot was bare, his balance was worse than usual which affected his movements.

Gorms was at a loss. Would it be better to take off his other boot as well? Or

would it be better to stay this way.

It had only taken a second for Fii to steal his boot, and yet it was more effective than expected.

“Now!”

Not overlooking her chance, Fii spurred her injured body into action and swung her sword.

“Naive!”

Gorms defended against her strike.
Their two swords clashed.

Gorms’ vision was still obstructed, he was bare on one foot, and his confidence was shaken. Because of all that, his attacks had grown duller.

In particular, the fact that he was bare on one foot made him hesitant to charge in, and he no longer had the strength to send her flying.

The overwhelming difference in strength had been reduced to the point where they could exchange blows now.

But even so, Fii was still at a disadvantage.

“There’s too much difference in height between them. Like that, he can’t reach any vitals.”

Given Fii’s height, her strikes only reached Gorms’ lower body. His vitals like the neck and the head were out of reach.

And the longer the match went, the more Gorms’ condition would improve. If the match dragged on, then Fii would have no chance of winning.

(Now or never!)

Perhaps because they had fought for a while, Fii was familiar with Gorms’ habits now.

His attacks were direct, and took the fastest route of attack.

When she crouched down a little, Gorms’ sword came down from above.

(As expected!)

Fii rolled to the side to avoid it.

When she did, the sword mowed horizontally to chase her. Although one would usually backstep in a situation like this, Fii instead leapt high to avoid it. Seeing this chance, Gorms swept his sword towards her.

“You’re done!”

(My chance!)

While airborne, she contracted her body like a coiling spring. And then when the wooden sword came at her, she kicked off it with all her might.

“Wha-, he jumped off the sword!”

Fii’s body drew a large arc through the air. She could now see Gorms’ head beneath her.

With all the power she could muster, Fii swung her sword down at him.

(I’ll win this match... and then live my second life!) The strike that took her all smashed into Gorms’ head.

妹

妹

And then——
After a while...

“The winner of the match is Gorms!!!”

The match ended.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 10

In a corner of the examination grounds, Fii sat crying into her knees.

(I couldn't win...)

The strike that she had given her all for had hit Gorms in the head.
It wasn't enough to take him down.

Even so, the damage he had taken was significant.

"Guh-..."

His massive body started to sway.

"Seriously? That Gorms got...!?"

"Oi, it can't be that he's really gunna lose, yeah?"

A shocked clamour ran through the spectators.

Fii's airborne body landed on the ground.

(I couldn't beat him with just one strike... I have to finish him off now...!)
Gorms was still unsteady on his feet.

Taking a deep breath, Fii raised her sword and kicked off the ground.

"I'm going to... win!"

In the next instant, the body that hit the ground was Fii's.

"GUAHH-...!?"

An intense pain assaulted her legs. Because of the cramping sensation, her hands clutched at them.

The audience started to grow noisy.

"Oi, don't tell me..."

"Muscle cramps...?"

“What the hell.”

Fii's body had reached its limit after avoiding Gorms' fierce assaults. That already strained body was then subjected to intense movement once more to give herself an opening, and then in the end she even sprung off a sword and tried to continue attacking when she reached the ground again. After all of that, her legs finally passed their limit.

In agony, Fii couldn't stand.
Seeing that, the judge ran over.

Seeing that, Fii immediately said,

“I can continue...! I can... still continue...!”

And again, she tried to stand.

“Ow-... Aah...”

But her legs had reached their end a long time ago. It was impossible to stand while they were cramping that way.

Attempting to do so had only worsened the pain.

“I can still... I still haven't... lost...”

Even so, Fii gripped her sword, and struggled against the ground to rise. She didn't want to lose. She had come all this way. Even though everything was just a single step away...

When the masked man presented her that question, Fii had taken it to heart. There was nobody in that villa. Besides Fii, not a single soul. And that was where Fii's life was destined to end. In the villa, surrounded by the tall walls, alone. In that gloomy place, alone. Always alone.

It was the resting place for an outcast who would fade away in solitude.

Fii couldn't accept it.

She wanted to walk where the sun shone. She wanted to spend her life there with other people.

Fii thought that back when she was a child and still adored the tales of knights, she had seen light there.

As she approached marriageable age though, she was forced to quit the sword, and before she knew it, she had forgotten her dream.

But now, she felt it more strongly than ever.

Somebody like Crow-san. Some special person she had yet to meet. Friends, companions, seniors she had yet to meet. People who would look at the real her. Fii wanted to live in the place where she could find all that.

“I can’t lose... I can’t... give up... aahhh...!”

She struggle desperately against the ground, despite the tears from the pain, and the crowd silently watched her.

Even Gorms just stood stock still, dumbfounded.

It continued for a whole minute.

The referee knight shook his head sadly.

“With your body like that, you’re done...” he judged. “The winner of the match is Gorms!!!”

The moment she heard his voice, the power left her body.

(I lost... I couldn’t win...)

A cold despair permeated her heart.

(In the end... I couldn’t grab hold... of anything...)

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 11

After that, Crow carried her to the infirmary, and after receiving treatment for her legs, Fii's examination was over.

Luckily her legs hadn't been seriously injured, so she could walk on her own after being treated.

Crow had left after bringing her here due to still having work, so Fii found a corner somewhere to cry by herself.

(Luckily? It's all meaningless...)

Even if she couldn't walk properly any more, it wouldn't matter in that tiny villa. Whether her legs were injured or not, it wouldn't change a thing.

(It's over...)

Fii's struggle was over. Her dreams were over. Her hopes.

"Haha, crying about losing?"

A voice came from above. Raising her head, she found Crow there. She never said where she would be going. Apparently he looked for and found her.

"Did you come here to console me...?"

Seeing Heath reject him darkly despite the sniffing, Crow could only give a troubled smile.

Even though just a few hours ago, this Heath kid had been so attached to him...

"What's wrong. Don't suddenly act so cold."

"I don't need anybody's consolation..."

She didn't want any consolation.

After all, it would probably be stuff like 'you'll get another chance' or 'try hard at the next exam'.

She didn't know how often the exams happened, but she was dubious that she would have another chance like this next year.

It was doubtful that the guards assigned to her villa would stay lazy. If they were just slightly more motivated, something like today would be impossible.

It was plausible that she wouldn't be able to take a single step out of her villa tomorrow.

That's why today was her last chance.

"Things are... over for me..."

"Hahh... Why are you acting like your life is over just because you lost?"

(Because it is. It's over... My life is over...) "Just saying, but you passed, yanno."

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 12

'You passed, yanno.'

For a moment Fii thought she was hearing voices.

But there was no mistake.

Crow had told her 'you passed'.

"Eh-, wha-, why...!?"

"Well, even if you ask that, nobody said that you'd fail if you lost, right?"

(N-, Now that he mentions it... But normally...)

"It's true that you'd have an advantage if you won, and those who make it as far as the semi-finals will be guaranteed a spot. But that's not all. Why do you think we knights were watching the matches? We do that so we can scout out skill sets and talents that our respective units need."

Crow turned to smile at Fii.

"And there's a captain that wants you as their apprentice knight. Congrats. You passed. Isn't that great, Heath?"

Fii stared in disbelief at the paper that he handed her.

But the name 'Heath' was definitely there. And that Heath now belonged to the 18th Knight Division.

(Huh...? Was there an eighteenth unit...?)

Fii tilted her head in puzzlement.

Of course she was confused. The Orstollian knight order was only supposed to have seventeen knight divisions.

"Aahh, so you do know about our knight order. Don't worry about it, the 18th really exists. There are some circumstances so it doesn't officially exist, but well, that's just on paper. We get treated as a proper knight division, and as long as

you graduate from being an apprentice, you'll get your identification papers as a knight. I'm also with the 18th you see. We're kind of like special forces, or a secret unit. Are you not fine with that?"

"No! No such thing!" exclaimed Fii, as she shook her head.

As long as she could gain an identity as a knight, it didn't matter to her which unit she joined. She was actually happy about it because now she would be in the same knight division as Crow.

After those words came out of mouth, the fact that she had passed finally struck her.

"Wahhh... Crow-san..."

Now that the stress was leaving her, she began to cry even harder than before.

"Oi, oi, you're going to cry after you pass as well? Geez, a kid like you is..."

Giving another troubled smile, Crow pulled Heath's head in and patted it.

"This is the only time I'm going to console a guy, alright?"

After Fii cried for a while longer, the two of them decided to head to the 18th's gathering place.

"Time to greet everyone. Can you walk?"

"Yes! I can walk!"

Even though she was depressed just a moment ago, Fii was so cheerful now, that she was wagging her proverbial tail. Crow couldn't help but smile in amusement.

"Whoa, so energetic now that you know you've passed huh. What happened to the gloom from earlier? What a mercenary kid you are."

"That was because I thought I'd failed for sure..."

Fii reddened and turned away in a huff in response to the teasing. But she quickly returned to a happy smile and looked back towards Crow.

"By the way, why did they want me! Could it be that they realised my hidden talent with the sword!?"

“Apparently it’s because you’re tiny and were good at scurrying about.”

“Hahh!? What’s that supposed to mean!”

She wasn’t very happy. That hardly sounded knightly at all.

“Well, you had guts too. Apparently you’re exactly what we need right now. You passed thanks to that, so don’t complain,” laughed Crow before ruffling Fii’s hair.

(Well, that’s true, but!)

If she was going to pass anyway, then she’d have preferred a cooler reason behind it. The girl had suddenly become quite greedy now that she was safe.

“Our unit is a gathering of specialists. Even if your swordsmanship isn’t great, as long as you’ve got your talent, we’ll take you.”

“Isn’t great, you say... So what are you good at, Crow-san?”

“Me? Well, lots of stuff. I suppose you could almost say that I’m too talented.”

“Uh huh...”

Fii glared at him suspiciously as he posed, hand against chin. Before long, something that looked like a storehouse came into view.

“Well, strictly speaking we’re an unofficial knight division, you see. Naturally our unit can’t get its own building, so we’ve borrowed a storehouse and remodelled it to use as our base.”

So it was a storehouse.

“Well, the inside is surprisingly nice, so don’t worry about it.”

Passing through the sliding door, what came into view was a spacious room with sofas, tables, chairs, bookshelves and other furnishings arranged about. On the shelves were weapons, and things that probably belonged to the other members.

Fii looked about. Pot plants with beautiful flowers. A make-up set- ...Why was there a make-up set here? Lots of bows and arrows. Hammers and other tools, as well as things that she really didn’t recognise.

And finally, four men, each sitting somewhere in the room.

“So youuu’re the rumoured newbie. Hmmm~ Nice to meetcha,” winked a young man without any special features.

“...” waved another man. Although he was larger than even Gorms, and was sitting on an especially large chair, his greeting was light and didn’t make Fii nervous.

“Let’s get along from now on,” said an eye-patched man, without any particular expression.

Finally, “I heard, but you really are a tiny fellow arentcha. Well, it’s nice to meetcha,” spoke a middle-aged man in work clothes as he waved to Fii with a smirk.

“Ah-, yes, please take care of me.”

Fii bowed to them in return.

“The Captain is going to be here soon, so just relax until he gets here,” said the plain-looking youth, as he produced some tea for her. It was a fragrant herb tea.

(The Captain... What kind of person is he...?)

It was because this Captain said he needed her that Fii was able to become a knight apprentice.

After waiting for a while, the clunking of footsteps sounded from outside. When the door opened, a single young man stepped into the room.

(Ah-... This person...)

With black hair and blue-grey eyes, the upper part of his face was concealed by a mask. But even beneath that mask, Fii could tell that this man had sharp and handsome features.

It was the masked man that had spoken to her when she collapsed.

The man took a slow look around the room, before speaking in a calm voice.

“It seems that everybody is here.”

Then, standing in a place where the five knights and one apprentice knight could see him, he continued.

“Because we have a new member with us, let me introduce myself once again. I am the Captain of this unit. The Captain of the 18th Knight Division, York.”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 13

(This is my Division Captain...)

As Fii looked at him, what she wondered was as you'd expect, (Why is he wearing a mask...?)

But she didn't really want to ask him.

It would be terrible if she offended him and he rescinded his offer to her. Also, for some reason he felt a little difficult to approach.

After York's concise introduction ended, it was everybody else's turn.

"I'm Conrad. Nice to meetcha, Newbie!"

First off was the plain-faced youth.

His height and weight were average, perhaps just a little on the slender side, and his face didn't have any distinguishing features. He seemed to have a bright personality, and when Fii considered the tea from earlier, she decided that he was probably good at looking after others.

But... Normal? Plain? Featureless? Unmemorable? When she looked at his face, that was the impression she got.

(He seems a little suspicious...)

That was her conclusion.

The next was the large man from before.

"..."

Though all he did was write 'Orbull' on some paper, jab his thumb at himself, and then wink.

"Orbull can't speak. He's huge, so he takes care of the fighting and weapons transports in our division. His hobby is horticulture," added Crow.

'Gardening,' explained Orbull.

“Apparently his dream was to become a knight and do some gardening in the royal gardens, but he can’t now that he’s in our division.”

Which was the reason for all these pot plants, Crow explained, as Fii watched the slightly dejected-looking Orbull.

“I see...”

Fii found it a little pitiful.

(It’s too bad he can’t just use the garden in that villa.) It was a small one, but it did have a garden and flower bed at least. Although it was messy, and seemed to have seen some long disuse.

But well, she couldn’t leave the villa as the Second Queen, and she could hardly give permission as Heath. In the end, it was impossible.

“Your flowers are incredibly beautiful. I’m looking forward to the day that you finally get a flowerbed to use.”

Hearing Fii’s words, Orbull gave a somewhat embarrassed, but happy laugh.

He’s a good person.

“I’m Palwick, the long-range attacker in our group,” said the eye-patched man.

“He’s a bow expert. Even at 200 metres, he’s never missed a mark.”

Once again, Crow elaborated further.

Fii simply thought it was amazing. The man said to be the best in Déman had a success rate of only 70% at 120 metres.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 14

After Palwick's introduction, there was only the middle-aged knight(?) in the work clothes to go.

He was perhaps the oldest person in the room.

"I'm Galluzzi. I'm technically a knight, but mainly I deal with the weapons and equipment. I don't really get involved with the fighting and whatnot. Gotta consider my age, and all that. Although sometimes I act a bit like a combat engineer I suppose," he said, before handing Fii a sheathed sword.

At a length between the standard knight sword and a knife, Fii found it weighed quite lightly in her hands.

"It's our congratulations for passing. For a tiny fella like you, the blade length should be just right. I've also done various other things to keep it light. But it should be as tough as any sword, so rest easy."

"Wah! Thank you very much!"

Without unsheathing it, she gave it a swing to see how it felt. It almost felt the same as the wooden sword she used during the match. With this, even the feeble Fii could swing it properly.

After staring at it with sparkling eyes, Fii happily hung it by her hips.

"If there's anything else you need made, come find me. If I can make it, I will."

Galluzzi gave her a calm smile.

The unidentified objects that she noticed earlier had probably been made by him.

Fii decided to ask him about them next time she had a chance.

With this, everybody in the room had been introduced.

"There's actually one more person, but they're on a special mission, you see.

Not here at the moment. I'll introduce you when you meet them."

But according to Crow, there was apparently still one more person.

It was Fii's turn to introduce herself now.

"I've been accepted into this division as an apprentice. My name is Heath! I'm not very skilled, but please take care of me!"

That last line sounded just like a Japanese bride.

Placing a hand on Fii's head, Crow added, "Apparently he comes from Theonore. That's how it is, so I hope you'll look after him."

(Eh-...?)

She never told him where she was from.

Or rather, what he said didn't even match up with the fake backstory she concocted.

She hadn't even heard of Theonore before.

"I see."

"Understood."

"Aye."

But all four knights readily assented.

In fact, Theonorea was an implicit code for illegal immigrant children, impoverished children without a nationality, or children with other legal issues.

These children would formally gain citizenship if they became knights, but while they were apprentices they were technically staying illegally. And so it was decided that they came from Theonore, and all details would be ignored during the duration of their apprenticeship.

Crow had completely decided that Heath was an illegal immigrant.

After all, Fii had been wearing ragged clothing during their first meeting, and on top of that she started crying just because he gave her some meat. Not only that, but everybody saw what sticky fingers she had during the match with Gorms.

He was completely convinced.

There were a few things that felt a little out of place. For example, she was well-spoken despite her accent, and her blonde hair and blue eyes were common amongst nobility, but it wasn't unheard of for entire noble families to be crushed into poverty for some reason or other.

(He must have suffered...)

Crow found himself empathising with this small boy, and wanting to help him out. And he himself was aware of how rare this was for him. Seeing how confused Heath was, Crow made sure to whisper into the boy's ears that he would explain things later.

Heath responded with an obedient nod.

"Umm... I..."

To be honest, everybody here seemed amazing, and Fii had suddenly lost confidence in her ability to become a knight.

"I'm not all that good with a sword, but I'll give my everything during training. I'll train my body as well... so I don't collapse any more, and I'm going to get better at fighting too. Also..."

Still, this was the only place left for her. So she wanted to tell them that she would give it her all. They had picked her up, so she would refine herself until she could help them during a crisis.

"Now, now, don't look so serious, Heath-chan. Take it easy, okay?"

"Right, right. Overworking yourself now won't change a thing. The road ahead of you is quite long, okay?"

Conrad and Crow seemed to be trying to soothe her.

(Everyone is so kind here. I have to try even harder so that they don't turn back on me...)

To Crow, however, compared to the concern that Heath would end up as a useless knight in the future, it was much more worrying that like today she would injure herself by overdoing things.

He had only known Heath for a short while, but whether or not it was because

of the environment she grew up in, Heath seemed to have a tendency towards setting her heart on rather extreme ideas.

Even though he and Conrad tried to calm her down just now, she had become even more determined instead.

At this rate, she was going to injure herself again.

“You know, Heath——”

“Heath.”

Just as Crow was about to calm her down again, somebody cut over him.

(Captain York...)

Although his voice was low and calm, it resounded through the room.

His blue-grey eyes showed neither a calming smile, nor an angry glare. They simply gazed at her in seriousness.

“I need you. That’s why I put you in our division. Had I not needed you, I wouldn’t have,” he said. “——So be prouder.”

I need you.

Those words seemed to echo in Fii’s heart.

Need.

Fii had been invisible to most people. Her parents paid almost no attention to her, and she was a princess whose existence was meaningless.

Even so, people looked after her. She was a princess, after all. But it was those same people who spoke ill of her, behind her back. Even so, she was thankful to them.

There were people who truly worried for her. Her sister, her maid friend, just a handful of people, but Fii loved them. Even so, they were always taking care of Fii, and she could never do anything in return.

Nobody actually needed her.

This was the first time.

The first time that somebody told her that she was needed.

The first time in her life that she had met somebody that needed her.

Captain York.

(In my whole life, this is the first time, that somebody told me they needed me...)

“How about it, Heath. If you understand, then answer me.”

His eyes were dead serious, and she believed that he meant every word. Holding her head high and with accented words, Fii, Heath, replied to the captain who had picked her up.

“Yes, Captain!”

Here in this new place, filled with kind people, and by the side of the Captain who needed her, began Fii’s new life.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 15

After Heath made off for the apprentice knight dormitories, Crow and York conversed by themselves.

The other members each had jobs, training, or resting to get back to.

“That silly kid left with a grin on his face, yanno. Looks like your words made him pretty happy.”

“I only spoke the truth.”

From his tone, Crow seemed quite close to York as well.

Crow was never a round-about man to begin with, but just now with York he sounded like he was speaking to an old friend.

York had shown no sign of embarrassment, and stated that he simply spoke the truth, but Crow turned a cheeky smirk at him.

“But if he knew who you actually were, I bet he’d be shocked huh, Your Majesty Roy.”

His casual tone spoke of their closeness, and they were in fact childhood friends.

“I’m sure I told you to call me York while I have this mask on. I have no intentions of telling Heath until he graduates as a full knight. It is technically a state secret, and telling him would simply pressure him.”

The 18th was a division that answered directly to the King. But of course, having the King himself act as captain was clearly a problem. Thus, under mask and alias, he operated as captain of an unofficial division. It was a secret that only captains or above knew, but Roy had strong charisma, winning the ardent respect of knights even as ‘York’.

That it was classified information was one of the reasons he didn’t tell Heath, but it was also because he was worried about Heath becoming too motivated, or

conversely too afraid.

Heath entered the division because he was needed, but he was currently still in training. Letting Heath concentrate on his training was Roy's way of being considerate.

"Changing the subject, was that Princess Fii white or black?" asked Crow, a little more seriously than usual.

"Who knows," answered Roy. "I've left that woman to Kain. Both her investigation and her treatment. I told him only to contact me if she's black."

"Oi, oi. Is that alright?"

"I am busy. I have work as a King, and there are plenty of other things I need to investigate regarding Princess Fiiru's case. Even thinking about a shameless woman like that is a waste of time. If she's black, then we show no mercy. If she's white, I still don't care. Taking advantage of her younger sister's marriage, and then intruding on my nation... It's obvious that nothing good will come of us meeting."

Sadly, that was how most of the country saw her.

An insolent woman who took advantage of her sister's marriage of love. A despicable woman who plotted to steal the King's favour from her sister. Of course, nobody knew how angry Fii felt about this. Nor did they know how cornered she had felt, or even the fact she had almost given up on everything.

"Well, if that's what you've decided then I'm not going to say a thing."

"More importantly is Heath. He has a talent we can use, and guts as well, but he seems to be somewhat emotionally unstable. Please take care of him as best you can."

"Don't need to tell me. Even if you didn't say anything, he's like a little brother to me. You teach him something too. He seems to really admire you."

"If I have the time."

'If I have the time' was in fact Roy's utmost consideration. As somebody who served as both knight and king, to spare time for Heath showed how much he valued her.

“I’m sure that kid’ll jump for joy if you teach him. Up until a few hours ago, he looked like he was going to die of despair, yanno. Did you see how hopeful he looked when he flew out of the room?”

“He is a knight who will shoulder the future of this country. ‘Tis a good thing.”

Roy had no idea.

That the woman he assumed was troublesome and insolent, and whose matters he had pushed onto a subordinate, had taken the apprentice knight exams, and of all things had been taken in by his own unit...

He had seeeriously no idea...

That although Heath had left the room filled with joy, the one who pushed her into the brink of despair to begin with, was none other than himself...

It was only far, far later, that upon looking back on this decision, Roy would find himself banging his head against the wall, wanting to die from regret.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 16

After leaving the 18th Division's warehouse, Fii headed to the dormitories where the apprentice knights would be living.

There were four dorm buildings in total, and they were spread across Orstoll's large castle.

In Orstoll, rather than knights constantly supervising an apprentice, instead the apprentice knights would be gathered here in a dorm. Here, they would spend their days attending something like a school, where instructors would teach and train them in the basics.

This too, was one of Roy's many reforms.

Training would take place between Monday and Thursday. Fridays and Saturdays were dedicated to learning under their designated knight divisions, where they would also be tasked with simple missions.

Sunday was when they were free.

Having said that though, they had only just finished their exams, and so the first week was left free for them to acclimate to their dorm life.

Of course, not all apprentices would immediately move in.

Those from noble backgrounds would take time to prepare, and saying goodbye to families took time as well.

Fii on the other hand had nowhere else to go, so she immediately moved in.

She was assigned to the Northern Dormitory, a wooden building with a blue roof and a calming atmosphere.

Earlier, Crow had handed her a paper, and Fii was now making her way to the room number that was on it.

A room on the window-side of the second floor. The room itself was terribly cramped, but it was enough for Fii.

After all, small or not, at least she was allowed outside. If she used the gate, she could even leave the castle.

Since she had no luggage to speak of, she carefully put down the sword from Galluzzi, before lazing about wherever.

Before long, a knock came from the door.

“Coming~”

“Oh-! So there really was somebody inside. Mind if I come in?”

“Mn, not at all.”

It had been a youthful boy’s voice.

Fii decided it was probably a fellow apprentice.

After opening the door with a click, three boys came into the room.

A lively-looking boy with spiky brown hair.

A gentle-looking boy with fluffy cream-coloured hair.

And a tall and lanky boy with a black side-fringe.

No sooner had they entered did they let out cries of shock.

“Eh...? A little kid!?”

“Why is such a small child here?”

“This little kid is an apprentice knight...?”

It was a little irritating.

“How rude. I’m probably the same age as you guys. Even if I look like this, I’m already 16.”

Regardless of her looks, she was already old enough to marry.

Or rather, unwilling though she may have been, she technically already was married.

To begin with, she only looked tiny as a boy. Compared to other girls of her age, she was only a little... Well, just a bit smaller...

...It wasn’t even 10 centimetres, honest.

Incidentally, her sister Fiiru was of the same height, but perhaps because she was a slender beauty, she actually looked tall.

“Geh-, you’re my age?”

“I’m 16 too.”

“I’m actually a year younger...”

Apparently they were all the same age, the tall boy aside.
The three boys obediently apologised.

“Well, that’s fine. Anyway, did you need something?”

Well, they were going to be her companions from now on. Fii didn’t want to start trouble either. She immediately forgave them.
Or rather, she actually wanted to get along with them.

“Yeah, well, we’re neighbours so I wanted to say hello. I’m in the room next door.”

“I’m in the room opposite here.”

“Mine is diagonally across from here.”

And apparently they felt the same way.
It seemed that they were here to say hello.

Incidentally, perhaps because each apprentice was given a room for themselves, the actual rooms were quite close together.
It was something she was very grateful for. It would be terrible if they were two or four to a room.
She was crossdressing after all...

“Anyhow, it’s some sort of fate that we ended up together. Let’s get along, yeah?” declared the boy with the light-brown hair.

Fii was totally fine with that.

“Mn, I’m glad to meet you too,” she replied. Putting on a smile, she introduced herself. “I’m Heath. Let’s get along.”

“I’m Slad,” said the brown-haired boy. “Let’s get along!”

“I’m Remié,” said the docile-looking cream-haired boy. “Let’s get along,” he smiled.

“I’m Geith. Let’s get along,” ended the black-haired boy, and he flicked a hand

in a wave.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 17

After that, Slad and the others invited her to have dinner with them. The first floor of the dorm was a dining hall, so that was where they were eating. It was open for their use at certain hours.

"It's so yummy! It's so yummy!"

At one of the tables sat Heath, gobbling down bowl after bowl, as tears ran down her face. Naturally, everybody was a little astounded.

It certainly wasn't disgusting, but neither was it delicious enough to warrant all the tears...

At least, that was their impression of the food.

In Fii's eyes, if you excluded Crow's meat stick, this was her first decent meal in a fortnight.

How could it be anything but delicious.

(He's definitely a Theonore...) they all thought.

And though they weren't wrong, not one of them knew that her background was completely opposite to expectations. When all was said and done, Fii was still royalty.

In addition, not only was she royalty, treated like a useless parasite she might have been, she was still technically their King's second wife.

At any rate, although they knew she was from Theonore, not one of them thought badly of her.

Slad and Geith were both commoners, while Remié was the son of a baron. Looking up to the knights who fought together to protect their country, the two of them joined a local sword dojo to train, while Remié trained with a tutor. Only after arduous practice had they finally been accepted as apprentice knights.

Because the three of them had entered out of their admiration towards the

Knight Order, they were amongst the most faithful towards the ideals and expectations of the knights.

Thus, being prejudiced towards a companion due to their background was something all three of them deemed shameful.

Plus, even after they began to converse with her, Heath herself wasn't unpleasant at all.

In fact, even her greedy table manners kind of reminded them of a squirrel, so they found her behaviour cute.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 18

"By the way, Heath, which division are you with?"

"Just so you know," began Remié, "Slad and I are in the 5th Division, and Geith is with the 9th."

"I'm with the 18th Division," she replied, between munching on her Hamburg steak.

Suddenly, the whole room went into an uproar. Because not everybody was in the dorms yet, the dining hall was sparsely populated, but every person there had their eyes on Fii.

And the three boys dining with her were no exception.

"The 18th!?"

"Is that true, Heath!?"

"Mn. It is, but...?"

Although she was a little surprised at everybody's reactions, Fii never stopped eating.

"Is it really something so shocking?" she asked in confusion, when Remié's visibly excited face shot near.

"Of course it's shocking! Everybody looks up to the 18th!"

"Usually the most talented apprentices join the 1st Division, but there are plenty of people who want to join the 18th even more, you know! Not just us apprentices either! Even plenty of full knights want to join!"

"But you have to be chosen by York-sama to join, and nobody's ever joined as an apprentice, you know! Nobody even thought it was possible!"

"I-, I see..."

Considering the quiet and gentle Remié, it came as a shock that he would suddenly talk so much.

“Just how on earth were you chosen!?”

“Yeah, tell us, Heath!”

Even Geith and Slad had incredible expressions. It was a little scary. Fii too was in awe at the change.

But this was something that everyone in the entire room wanted to know. If they knew how she did it, perhaps they too would have a chance! Everybody in the dining hall waited with baited breath.

“Umm, apparently Captain picked me out.”

“By Captain, you mean York-sama!?”

“Mn.”

(So he really was picked out by York-sama!) (Just what kind of secret is Heath...?) Everybody in the dining hall waited to hear his secret.

“Apparently it was because I’m tiny.”

The dining hall went silent.
The three boys with her, as well as everyone else here, found themselves staring.
She certainly was tiny.

She was a whole size smaller than even the smallest amongst them.
Perhaps she was even the tiniest in the history of the knight order...

And what they were also thinking...

(What the heck kind of reason is that!) as well as...

(It’s impossible for us...)

If you simply wanted to grow bigger, then you could just eat more and train your body, but becoming smaller than you already were was completely impossible.

Even if you gave it your all, it was impossible for humans to grow shorter...

In the end, all the boys’ dreams of joining their admired 18th Division

continued to be mere dreams.

“Also, they said that I was nimble, and I had guts.”

Paying no attention to the crushed hopes of the boys, Fii gobbled up her food as usual as she stated the other reason she could join, but unfortunately nobody was listening to her any longer.

After all, the first condition had already excluded everybody but her.

“What’s wrong, everyone?”

Noticing that everybody had collapsed onto their tables, Fii tilted her head in wonder.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 19

It had been a week since she had become an apprentice. During that week, Fii's life had been completely fulfilling. She had grown closer to the apprentice trio, and they had even gone shopping in town together. She bought clothes (albeit male ones) for herself, as well as things for everyday life, for example. Because her room was small, she also bought small decorations that she liked despite their size. Either way, she had fun. The money she had received was from Crow. When he overheard that she was going shopping, he had given it to her as 'an advance payment'.

Speaking of which, apparently Remie was into plush dolls. He was embarrassed because he didn't think it was suitable for a boy, and a knight apprentice no less, but Fii thought it was completely fine. Remie had continued glancing towards the shop window, but he had been too embarrassed to enter. So instead, Fii powered right into there, and bought the one he seemed to want. Apparently that had been very manly of her.

The trio were perhaps the first normal friends she had made in her entire life, so spending time with them had been fun. Not only that, although they had curfews, to be able to walk about freely outside was amazing.

Fii was living her second life to its fullest.

While she spent her week like that, all members of the Northern Dorm had finished moving. And amongst the apprentices living there, had been Gorms with whom she had tangled with.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 20

The day before the lessons began, Fii had been drinking tea in the dorm lounge when suddenly, two boys walked in front of her.

The gaze they were giving her wasn't one of somebody who wanted to become a friend. Instead, they were filled with hostility and arrogance.

(I guess it isn't all good people after all.)

She was used to malice.

For her entire life, it was the type of treatment she was most used to, after indifference.

"Aren't you getting a bit ahead of yourself, just because you made it into the 18th?"

"Despite losing in the first match for the entrance exams."

Being the first apprentice to have ever entered the 18th, Fii was a bit famous. Fii didn't think it was anything that amazing.

It was just like Captain York said.

He needed her, which was why she entered. That was it. It wasn't about being better or worse than anyone.

That's why she so simply told everybody her results.

A loss in the first match.

Nobody had particularly mocked her for it.

After all, the reason she had entered the 18th was because she was 'tiny'.

Despite boys wanting to be taller in general, for a while there were a number of strange phenomena such as boys being jealous of Fii's lack of height, Geith squatting down and saying "So this is your world...", and everybody seeing that and squatting as well, causing Fii to think to herself 'It looks like Boys are kinda stupid...'. Still, it had more or less been peaceful, and Fii had fun as well.

But as the rumours about her spread, the number of unpleasant people began to increase.

“Not only that, you’re a Theonore, aren’t you. Whether you’re a hobo or an immigrant, you think you have what it takes to become a knight!”

Over the last week, Fii had learnt from everyone else what it meant to be a Theonore.

When she realised, Fii was thankful to Crow.

Since coming to this country, the one who had helped her the most was Crow. Even though he had no idea about her circumstances.

And although Fii never thought anything much of herself, York had told her to be proud.

Because of that, Fii didn’t want to give way to these boys, and she met their gaze.

“It’s true that I’m weak, and my background isn’t good. But I have the right talents, which is why they brought me into the 18th. That’s all it is, nothing more, nothing less. Besides, background doesn’t matter when it comes to becoming a knight.”

Because they had all just arrived here, the two boys didn’t know just how stubborn Fii could be. Her reaction had them flustered.

She was tiny, and had a girly face, so they had been sure that her personality would have been weak as well.

She even lost during her first match.

“Uu-... Hmph, a guy like you? Didn’t you bribe them or something to get in...?”

“Yeah. I bet something dirty happened!”

In that moment, Fii’s eyes narrowed coldly. And then after her expression turned into one of obvious mocking, she snorted.

Fii was angry.

It wasn’t pleasant that they had mocked illegal immigrants and the poor, nor that they had stupidly accused her of bribery. But this was something else.

“Are the two of you idiots? Do you think the Captain is the sort of person who would allow that?”

In this past week, York had completely gained Fii's trust.

Every apprentice knight looked up to him, but even so, Fii was amongst the most intense.

To begin with, York had earned her admiration for being the first person to ever say that she was needed. But during the one week with the apprentice knights where they had fervently told tales of his greatness, that admiration slowly became reinforced.

By now, she trusted him, she worshipped him, and she was as good as the first member of the York Faith.

To her, the accusation that she had entered through bribery was as good as insulting Captain York himself.

Not only that, it was an insult to everybody else in the 18th as well.

But lashing out would be immature.

If it was Captain York, he wouldn't pay any attention to nonsense like this. So Fii simply laughed at them in scorn.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 21

Fii's mocking turned their faces bright red.

"Hmph! I act modestly to give you face, and look at you getting ahead of yourself!"

"Yeah! Look at this scrawny thing."

"Hmph."

Fii had no recollection of him ever acting modestly, but given that these boys were broken track records, she had concluded that it was stupid to spend any more time on them.

She turned away.

"Can you get out of my way already? Talking here is a waste of time."

Fii had no intention of spending any longer on them, but because their bodies were in the way, she was finding it hard to leave.

Although the two glared at her, they didn't have the nerve to actually attack.

It was at that time that a large shadow appeared behind them.

"The hell are you two doing?"

A muscular body unthinkable for a boy, and a scary face like a gorilla. It was Gorms.

The moment they caught sight of him, the expressions of the duo turned joyful.

"Gorms-san! This midget is acting cheeky even though he lost to you in the first round. He's getting all ahead of himself because he entered the 18th!"

"That's right! Please teach him his place!"

Despite saying all that, in the end they were too afraid to act themselves, and pathetically borrowed somebody else's strength. Fii was astounded that they made it through the entrance exams.

But as expected, with Gorms here she wouldn't be able to win.

She had planned on giving her best if the argument with the boys had turned into a scuffle, but she already knew how strong Gorms was.

Even with a wooden sword in hand, Fii had been unable to beat him. Now that they were barehanded, she had absolutely no chance of victory.

Not only that, the other two would be able to surround her.

Well, she was still going to struggle as best she could though.

(Is he going to attack?)

Or so she was wondering as she looked straight up, when she found Gorms looking right at her as well.

Gorms went for the collars. Of the two boys, that is.

"Why the fuck do I have to listen to you? Fuck off."

Glared at by his scary face, the two boys ran away in tears.

Fii stared at him blankly.

Just like when they first met, Gorms gave another mocking smirk.

"Honestly, you find their type everywhere, huh. Making fun of you because you're small even though they don't know the first thing about you."

"You know, that sounds a little familiar..."

Seeing Gorms talk to her so familiarly, Fii raised her eyebrows, and narrowed her eyes into an astounded stare.

"Don't be silly. I made fun of you because I was strong. It wasn't because you were tiny."

"I see. Well you certainly are."

That wasn't something she could deny.

Because of various coincidences, she had managed to put up a long fight, but it wouldn't have been strange had he taken her down right at the beginning. And even with luck on her side, and even after she had given her all, in the end she couldn't win against him.

"Hahhahha! So you admit it too. I'm fucken strong. It's natural that I was the

overall champion,” laughed Gorms with his arms crossed, with the cold compress still on his forehead.

Under the compress was the bruise that Fii had given him with all her might.

“But the hardest fight I had was the first match with you, yanno. You were slippery, and annoying, stubborn and cowardly too. Honestly, it was the worst.”

From his words, Fii could tell that he had acknowledged her.

“I see. So I was the one that gave you the hardest fight.”

“That’s how it is. Don’t pay any attention to those idiots.”

“Mn. Ehehe,” she laughed happily.

Gorms sat down on the chair next to hers. His expression turned serious.

“I’m sorry for telling you to go home. You were desperately giving your all. And you had balls too.”

“Nah, don’t worry about it. I’m sorry for calling you a gorilla too.”

“I’m begging you, don’t make me remember that...”

Having the gorilla thing brought up again, Gorms looked seriously depressed now.

Fii really did feel guilty, so seeing that, she tried to cheer him up telling him that she was just getting him back, and that he didn’t really look like one.

(And even if you do look like a gorilla, you’re a very cool gorilla) she thought in her heart.

After his expression returned to normal, Gorms turned to Fii with a clenched fist.

“Well, next time things won’t go your way, so prepare yourself. This time I’ll really send you flying in a hit.”

“Then I’d better think of a new tactic to confuse you the next time as well.”

“Put some of that effort into your sword first, dammit...” muttered a pale Gorms.

He couldn’t feel even a little chivalry from her reply.

“By the way, if you claimed the overall victory, does that mean that you’re the strongest out of all the apprentice knights?”

Having completely put Gorms into her ‘friends’ category, Fii’s tone was without reserve.

“Obviously! Or so I wanna say, but we’re actually divided into blocks, so it’s hard to say. A total of 11 other guys made it in their own blocks. Well, I’m probably still the strongest though.”

“I see~ So even you’re still just the top 12 huhh.”

“OI!”

Gorms glared at Fii for so easily demoting him in her eyes.

“Ahaha, looks like the two of us are going to have to work hard, Gorms.”

“Yeah. You’re right.”

Fii and Gorms smiled at each other.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 22

The apprentice knight lessons had finally begun.

Even so, they just sat in a classroom, learning maths, history, language, and the like.

It was the educational policy of the Orstoll Knight Order to train not only their bodies, but their minds and manners as well.

A bespectacled teacher was instructing them about the structure of the country.

"Gorms, you can't sleep here."

Fii pinched the cheeks of the neighbouring Gorms as she stared at him, astounded.

It hadn't even been ten minutes since the beginning of class, yet he was already laying flat on his desk.

"Don't get in my... way, Heath... I don't care... It's so boring I can't stand it... Gunna sleep..."

"You can't, I said. Captain York said that a knight has to know the country's history."

"Captain, Captain, York, York, that's all you bloody say. Enough already."

"You have to listen to what Captain York says!"

"Oi, you're being too loud...!"

"Heath-kun, Gorms-kun, quiet down!" came a warning.

"I'm sorry."

"Sorry..."

In the end, the teacher got angry at them.

“It’s your fault, Gorms...”

“It’s cause you kept nagging away...”

The two of them continued to bicker quietly.

In the mornings, Fii and Gorms sat next to each other.

Because Fii was a tiny thing while Gorms was massive, when they sat together they gave off a strange sense of balance.

Although the two had no idea, Fii was one of the few students who could talk to Gorms without fear.

With his huge build and scary face, it couldn’t be helped that he was an object of fear for many students.

“Show me your notes later, Heath.”

“Geez, you should do it yourself.”

Slad and the others watched in awe as Fii casually rejected Gorms.

“He pinched Gorms on the cheek. Dude has balls...”

“Yeah... Heath-kun is amazing...”

Later on, when Fii learnt what everybody thought of her, what came to mind was, (He definitely has a rude tone, and he has some rough parts to him too, but he’s not even all that scary. But I guess I’m the same, since I also used to think that he was a super bad guy, huh...) It made her realise that people really lived their lives always misunderstanding others, and that she was no exception.

Later in the afternoon, they had training.

“FUCKK YEAHHHHHHHHHHH! FINALLY TIME FOR TRAINING!”

Gorms was overjoyed, while Fii was burning with determination!

(Alright! Gunna do it! I’m definitely gunna overtake everyone!)

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 23

The afternoon training began.

“I’m your instructor, Hislo. I’m going to train you to the bone, so prepare yourselves.”

In front of the gathered apprentice knights in one of the training grounds in the castle, stood a strict-looking instructor with his arms folded across his chest.

“Ugeh-, so our instructor is Hislo-san...?”

“So he’s in charge of the Northern Dormitory this year... We’ve got such crap luck...”

Apparently this man was famous.

Many of the knight hopefuls knew a certain amount about the knight order before they entered.

Not only that, many of them had spoken to their seniors during the week before the lessons started.

It was stranger to find somebody like Fii, who knew nothing at all.

During this last week, Fii had spoken to the people of the 18th Division. Because he was busy, she only managed to speak to Captain York a few times, but she valued the time they had.

Because almost everybody in the 18th Division was scouted by York, only Crow had any experience as an apprentice knight. Because of that, Fii learnt almost nothing about life as an apprentice from the others.

Incidentally, Crow only ever talked about things like this cute maid he knew as an apprentice, or how he almost entered into a romance with this noble girl and the like.

(If it wasn’t for his bad habits with women, he really would’ve been so cool...)

So Fii thought, as she completely ignored his happy stories about his love life

as an apprentice.

Still, he did at least tell her, “All the instructors are thinking about your best interests. You won’t go wrong by listening to them.”

As for York, he told her, “Learn from the people around you.”

“No whispering! I plan on teaching you swordsmanship, fist fighting, and all sorts of things, but none of that happens until your body is strong enough. That means your first month is going to be strength training. We start with running!”

Everybody groaned when they heard that.

Boys preferred flashier things like sword-fighting, over boring things like running.

Slad looked as crestfallen as everybody else.

Remié surprisingly liked running. Maybe because he was easygoing.

Geith’s expression remained the same.

Next to her, Gorms began warming up while muttering, “Gunna take first place,” while Fii herself muttered, “Gunna follow Gorms as much as I can!” while doing the same thing.

Which earned her a poke to the forehead.

“You dumbass. I already know how little strength you have because of our match. Just run at your own damn pace!”

It was true that Gorms had attacked very strongly and forced Heath to take some strenuous evasive measures, but even taking that into account, her stamina was out of the question for an apprentice knight.

On the other hand, only her enthusiasm seemed to soar above others, which just made things worse.

“Mu...”

(He has a point...)

Fii gave up on following Gorms. Still, she was still burning with enthusiasm to go all out for York.

She had completely forgotten.

That both York and Crow had warned her,

“Don’t overdo it.”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 24

As expected, perhaps you could say, Fii was the apprentice with the least stamina.

And naturally so.

On the one hand, you had boys who spent their lives preparing to become knights with martial arts and sword training.

On the other, you had a girl who lived as a princess, and what's more, she had done nothing except etiquette lessons over the last few years.

It was impossible to expect a fair challenge.

Because the running exercises were designed to build stamina, even the well-trained boys had a tough time completing the numerous laps.

The one at the forefront was Gorms.

After him was surprisingly, Remié. It made sense now that he didn't seem as bothered as everybody else; long distance was apparently his specialty.

He stayed a perfect distance from Gorms and followed his pace.

Apparently Gorms wasn't good at long distance. Because his body was big, it would always take more energy to move his body compared to others.

(If I remember right, this guy is with Heath a lot. Since he had an expression like a carefree lamb I never thought he'd be able to run this far. But I'm not gunna lose.)

Gorms pumped himself up and maintained his lead.

Both Slad and Geith were in the middle.

Slad looked entirely unamused, while Geith had the same expression as ever.

And then, dead last, was Fii.

She found herself unable to keep up at all with these boys, running along at the back as she wheezed.

By the time she had gotten halfway through a lap, her face was pale blue.

Yet she never complained once.

“Heath, you okay?”

Even Hislo, who the apprentices called the instructor from hell, found himself worrying for her and called out numerous times.

To begin with, the reason for his harsh words was in order to push the lazier students to their limits.

But the student in front of him had not only reached her limits, but was attempting to continue past them.

“Heath, if you think it’s too much, you don’t have to run.”

“I’m fine... Sorry... I can’t... breath, so... please don’t make... me talk...”

In other words, she was having it so bad that she couldn’t even speak. Despite that, her eyes showed no intention of quitting.

Hislo wasn’t sure whether to stop her either.

All the other students besides her were beginning to reach the goal.

“Is that kid gunna be okay...?”

Gorms watched the unsteady, but still running Heath.

Gorms was the first in the Northern Dormitory to reach the goal. He had shaken off Remié’s ghosting and dashed near the end.

“I’m a little worried...” said Remié, who had reached the goal just after Gorms.

More and more, the others were beginning to hit the goal as well, and eventually only Fii was left running.

“You don’t have to overdo things.”

“I can do it...”

Fii’s reply to Hislo was immediate.

Drenched in sweat, she continued to run.

As her endurance and strength was used up, eventually she couldn’t even lift her legs.

But having seen the difference between her and the boys around her had

made her all the more determined to, at the very least, finish the training.

“If you... can’t wait for... me, then... please move on... to the next... item... I’m... going to finish...” she said between laboured breaths.

“Heath... Try your best...” prayed Remié.

“Hahaha, I knew it was impossible for a midget to become a knight.”

“Yeah. This is what happens when the poor overreach themselves.”

The two boys who picked a fight with Fii last night made rude remarks but,

“Shut the fuck up. If you won’t, I’ll make you.”

“I won’t let you go if you make fun of him.”

“I won’t either.”

“Same...”

Not just Gorms, but Slad, Remié and Geith all glared the duo into silence.

Even as her consciousness became hazy, Fii continued to move her legs. At any rate, she needed to catch up to them. For the sake of the first person to have ever needed her in her life. So that she could be useful to Captain York.

Because they couldn’t all wait for Heath alone, the other apprentices moved onto muscle training.

But Gorms and the others still watched Heath run.

And then, finally, she finished her lap and reached the goal.

It took her twice as long as everybody else.

She was drenched head to toe in sweat.

“You did well, Heath...”

When it came to Remié, he was already teary.

But what the other three felt, as they watched the completely pale Fii, was that perhaps they should be worrying instead.

And just as they predicted, only a few seconds after passing the goal, Fii collapsed like a sack.

“Heath!”

Both Hislo and the boys all ran to her.

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It had happened when the King, Roy, was in the middle of conversing with an official.

Crow suddenly barged in.

“Oooi! Roy!”

“What’s the matter?”

Crow’s tone was the same as ever, even in front of an official.

“Why if it isn’t the esteemed son of the Harbard Duke’s family.”

The official respectfully bowed to him.

“Haha, please stop that. My dad might be a VIP, but I’m just a knight.”

“No, no, I cannot do that.”

(Honestly speaking, it’d be easier to deal with people who just get angry like that Prime Minister. Still, I’m not going to change though...)

Crow was the son of a powerful duchy and Roy’s childhood friend. Only, his personal position was just that of a knight, so he didn’t feel comfortable having the high ranking officials treat him so respectfully. Still, it was his fault for speaking so casually to people no matter their station, including the King, so he couldn’t really say anything.

“Well what is it?”

“Ah, well, you told me to look after Heath, right? That kid overdid things at training and collapsed just now,” Crow said, as he scratched at his head.

“I see.”

After a nod, Roy turned back to the official.

“Something has come up. I will be leaving for a while.”

“Y-, Your Majesty? There is a meeting in five minutes, you know?”

“I should have already roughly told you the general outline and goals for that

meeting. Please take care of the rest yourselves.”

With that, Roy left the official behind and headed for the Northern Dorms. Following right behind him was Crow with a knowing smile.

“Where is Heath?”

“He’s currently sleeping in the infirmary.”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 25

That sure was pathetic... I need to try even harder next time...) Fii lay in bed, looking at the ceiling.

"Aah, geez. This kid's face is saying he's definitely gunna do this again."

She didn't know how long he had been there, but Crow was standing close-by.

"Oh? Crow-san. Wah-, what are you doing!?"

Crow had walked over to her, before suddenly picking her up like a princess. He laughed impishly after seeing Fii's bewildered expression.

"I'm here to bring a stupid team member in for a lecture. Captain York is waiting with a steern one."

"Captain is?"

A lecture... Did she do something wrong?
Ah, collapsing from just a bit of running?
Certainly, she was quite pathetic for it. Perhaps the Captain was angry.

Guessing what she was thinking, Crow gave her forehead a flick.

"Ow-!"

"Not for that, idiot."

"But I haven't said anything yet..."

"Your face says it all. You're easy to read, after all."

Apparently that wasn't it.
But then why was the Captain angry?
Fii tilted her head in confusion.

"You're pretty light, huhh. Just like a girl."

"L-, Leave me alone..."

While Crow was carrying her like a princess, York was standing in a back garden in the Royal Palace, away from the eyes of others.

“So you’ve come...” he said quietly.

Crow sat Fii down on one of the chairs prepared beforehand.

One of his hands was gripping the hilt of the sword at his hip.

(Eh...? Execution...? He’s that angry at me...!?) Fii watched York’s serious expression as she thought stupid things.

Of course, York had not called Fii here to cut her down. That was actually rather obvious though...

Five wooden dolls were placed in the area.

“Heath. Watch this.”

With those words, York drew his sword.

Just as Fii was feeling a little blinded by the glint, York cut all five dolls down in one strike.

His swordsmanship was too much for Fii to follow.”

“How was it, Heath?”

“A-, Amazing... Captain.”

It really was.

The speed of the strike was naturally amazing, but the accuracy of his swordsmanship was as well. Even though they were by no means placed close together, each one had been accurately struck.

(Technique this amazing... I’d never be able to see it in Déman...) Fii felt overwhelmed by the way York handled his sword.

“Heath. Do you think you can learn this in a week...?”

“I-, I can’t...”

It was impossible.

Because Fii didn’t think that even training for her whole life would enable her to do that.

“Naturally. It took me 18 years to learn this.”

“18 years...”

(So it even took somebody like Captain York that long to learn it...) Realising the significance of being shown this, Fii gullped.

“It goes for your fellow apprentices too. It took them five, ten years to gain the strength they have.”

(I see. Then I have to try even harder...) “You’re wrong.”

York shook his head to deny the words Fii hadn’t spoken.

“Didn’t I say it? 18 years. If you could gain power overnight, nobody would endeavour for years. If you really think it’s possible, then you’re making light of everybody else around you. I’m sure I told you to learn from the people around you. That means to respect their strength, and to appreciate it as well.”

Hearing this, Fii gasped.

“Let me say this, Heath. Do not focus on beating them now. Spend five years to overtake their current level. Spend ten years to overtake their level five years from now. You intend on being a knight for a long time, don’t you?”

“Y-, Yes...!”

Right. She was going to be a knight for a long time...
Even if she couldn’t beat them now, over the years she could catch up one step at a time.

“If you continue to overdo things, it will simply waste the days you have to catch up. Are you fine with that?”

“I’m not, Captain!”

“I thought not. Overdoing things will decrease the days that you can try your best. That is not a good thing. Do you understand, Heath?”

“Yes, Captain! I won’t overdo things anymore!”

Fii immediately saluted atop her chair.
Seeing this, Crow gave another knowing smile.

York nodded.

“Then I will be going. I’m busy, you see.”

“Yes! Thank you very much!”

Fii stood straight, as she watched York walk away.
She engraved his words onto her heart.

Amazing swordsmanship, and words that cut through her conceit, telling her what was truly important.

(The Captain really is amazing!)

Once again, Fii thought that she was lucky to have joined the 18th, and lucky to have become Captain York’s subordinate.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 26

After that, Fii stopped being reckless in her training. As proof, the day after she collapsed, she did as she was told and sat out for a day.

“York created a training menu just for you, yanno?”

“Captain did?”

Crow handed over a training menu that she would go over step by step, starting the next day.

Apparently he had told Hislo as well, so there was no need for Fii to tell him herself.

Once she began doing something different from everybody else, she began to stand out again.

Starting with those two boys from earlier, sometimes people would make fun of them. But Fii paid them no heed, and Gorms and the others would glare at them too.

The more peculiar things on the menu were the stretches and calisthenics. He had created the menu to suit her characteristics, and included various things such as running a distance that she could handle, strength training, as well as practice on how to ukemi and recover from blows, but the most salient exercises were the stretches and calisthenics that composed half of the menu.

But for Fii, those stretches and flexibility exercises were something she mastered right away, unlike everything else.

“That kid is amazing... Is he a mollusc or something...?”

“Or rather, it’s a little gross to watch...”

In a corner of the training ground, Fii, who had turned into a strange being that rolled about in strange poses, was seen by Gorms and the others as they ran

past for their running drills.

When they saw Fii doing things that they couldn't (in a variety of meanings), the mocking died down and almost died out.

At night, Fii would eat lots and lots.

"It's yummy! It's so yummy!"

"I've said this before, but is it actually that good? I mean, it ain't bad, but..."

"Yeah! It's yummy!"

Back when she was a princess, Fii had never really cared much about food, but recently everything seemed to taste particularly delicious.

Perhaps the two weeks in the villa and the exertion as a knight apprentice had taught her the joys of eating.

Whatever the reason, the food was delicious to Fii. But one night, just as she had finished one plate, she stopped.

"Huh? Are you done?" asked Remié.

Normally she would be helping herself to a large plate of seconds.

"Yeah. Crow-san told me to try and keep my current figure."

She actually wanted to eat more, but she endured for the Captain's sake.

"I see."

"Your training really has taken a weird direction, huh."

Normally it was common sense to eat a lot and grow as large as possible. Although there were a few exceptions, knights would fundamentally gain power proportional to their size. Gorms was a good example of that.

"Really?"

"Really."

Fii looked on enviously at the stew Slad was eating, but he pretended not to notice as he nodded in reply.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 27

A month had passed since Fii had become an apprentice.

And today was a Friday.

It was on Fridays that an apprentice would report to their attached divisions to receive guidance, and to participate in actual missions.

“Good morning~”

“Ah, hi Heath-chan. I’ve got tea~”

When she entered the meeting place for the 18th Division, the plain-faced young man, Conrad, had some tea as always.

Today’s was cinnamon tea.

She was happy that he always welcomed her like this, but she was wondering if it was okay that he wasn’t training or working like everybody else.

Fii had the feeling that she saw him every time she came here.

“It’s the authentic stuff from the Kingdom of Fenam. How is it? Good?”

“Yes, it’s great.”

The sweet scent of the cinnamon smelt fantastic.

And although she didn’t know what was so fun about it, Conrad would sit on the other end of the table and smile happily as he watched her drink.

(I really don’t get this person...)

Perhaps she should say that she didn’t have a good grasp on him.

He seemed similar to her gentle-mannered friend, Remié, but then something was different.

Or rather, they were completely different.

After all, Remié would make such unfathomable smiles.

(Speaking of which, he’s the only one whose specialty I don’t know.) When

everybody introduced themselves and mentioned their fields of specialty—Crow had spoken for the mute Orbull—this person was the only one who mentioned only his name.

“Conrad-san, what’s your specialty?”

“Secret.”

She asked him directly, but all she got in return was his finger on his lips, and a playful wink.

(This person is...)

Fii decided to give up on asking him.

Around the time that she finished her tea, Captain York and Crow came through the entrance.

“Good morning, Captain! Crow-san!”

Fii left her chair and greeted them with a bow that was no longer new to her.

“It is good to see you lively, Heath.”

“Yes!”

“Hey, am I an extra or something?”

“Because I see you quite often, Crow-san.”

“So mercenary, oi. I did actually volunteer to be the one to look after you, yanno.”

“Is that so!? Thank you very much!”

“Not really sure how to act if you thank me honestly like that...”

Apparently Captain York was busy, so you wouldn’t see him that often, even in the 18th.

He probably had lots of work in both the light and the shadows, Fii arbitrarily concluded.

“Let us keep the chatter to a minimum for now. Orbull is waiting.”

Now that he mentioned it, she realised again that Orbull wasn’t here. But well, that was hardly uncommon. The members of the 18th were often

missing from here due to missions and the like.

(But waiting for us, is it? I wonder what for...) Fii wondered, but since he told them not to chat, she didn't speak up.

York was standing in front of her with arms crossed.

Fii tilted her head in wonder.

"Heath. Today I will have you participating in a mission as well."

"A mission...!?"

Since entering this place a month ago, not once had she joined on a mission. Or rather, she had no recollection of actually doing anything on Fridays and Saturdays.

She went through her training menu, but after that she would have tea with Conrad-san, or hear stories from Crow-san about how he picked up this or that girl, sometimes she would help with Orbull-san's potted plants, and sometimes she would watch Palwick-san and his archery practice, or Galluzzi while he made something or other.

On days that the Captain came, she would give a report on what she was doing each day, and then she would enjoy his words for her.

The apprentices in the other divisions would do things like taking guard roles in town, or patrolling there; simple missions like that. Fii had always found it a little envious.

But today, she would finally be able to join a mission as well.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 28

ii was brought to a lavish manor in the outskirts of the city.

They had travelled here by horse, but because Fii didn't know how to ride, she sat on Crow's horse behind him.

Both York and Crow seemed to be skilled riders.

Incidentally, Conrad hadn't come.

When Fii left for her mission, he simply waved and told her "Try your best~" with a smile.

(I really wonder what that guy even does.)

He was simply filled with mysteries.

Around the manor, there were people who seemed to be lookouts.

Using the woods around the manor as cover, they circled around to the back of the manor and descended from their horses in a place where they wouldn't be spotted. Waiting there was Orbull.

While skilfully hiding his large figure in the shade of a tree, he waved at the three newcomers.

Then, after receiving the reins of the horses from Crow and York, he led them off somewhere and disappeared.

It was around then that Crow finally began to explain the mission.

"This is a villa belonging to a merchant called Khanzar. Apparently he's got a hand in slave trading all across the continent, and there's a rumour that he's got some of the kidnapping victims hidden away in that manor.

If we investigate him normally, he might have the time to hide the evidence. The longer we wait, the greater the chance that they'll be sold. So we're gunna find some direct evidence, so we can straight-up nab him."

"I see~"

(But wouldn't that be difficult?)

If he really was involved in slave trading, there would be even more lookouts on the inside. Fii couldn't imagine that knights could infiltrate without being seen.

"That's where you come in."

"Are you telling me to get kidnapped? Sure. I don't mind."

Fii was impressed. If she was infiltrating as a sting, then they would get evidence in no time.

"No."

"Hell no. We're going to get you to infiltrate, yeah, but you're coming in from the top."

"Top?" asked Fii, as she tilted her head in confusion at the two.

Following Crow, she parted from the others and was brought close to the back of the manor.

There were three lookouts right by them, but Crow leapt out from the shade of the tree and struck them unconscious with his bare hands.

(Amazing...)

Even if it was a surprise attack, it was still an amazing feat of power. The apprentice knights had also taken lessons in barefisted techniques, but none of the instructors had been quite so amazing.

(Crow-san really is somebody amazing...)

Fii was excited.

Crow called her over, and she entered the back gate of the manor. It was a blindspot with no windows. Perhaps that was why there were three guards here, but unfortunately for the merchant, those guards were now unconscious.

"Err, as I recall, the architect said it was around here...?" Crow muttered to himself, as he stood on the edge of a wall and looked about up top.

Before long, "Oh! There it is," he said, as he pulled out a block from the wall.

With that, there was now a small hole in the outer wall.

Grabbing Fii beneath the armpits, he brought her in front of it.

“Watcha think? Think you can fit?”

According to Crow, it was a hole connected to the ventilation system, and had access to the entire ceiling of the manor.

Fii easily slid into it.

She found herself in a slightly wider space now—though it was still fairly narrow—and skilfully turned back to face him. Sticking her face out of her hole with a slightly dissatisfied and discouraged expression, she said,

“Could it be that you guys took me in for this?”

Considering the size of the hole, it was impossible for any knight to fit in here with the exception of Fii.

Conrad was the next smallest, but even so, his medium build and height would have found it impossible too.

“Well, I won’t say that wasn’t part of it,” nodded Crow with a troubled smile.

“Well, that’s fine, I guess. I suck at fighting anyway, and as long as somebody needs me, I won’t complain,” she replied with a pout.

It wasn’t that she was dissatisfied with being picked for that, but like anybody else, she would have preferred a cooler reason.

“Well then, look to see if there are any kidnapping victims, and then if you can, try and find out where. It’ll make things easier when we need to save them, you know?”

With that, he handed her what seemed to be a map of the ventilation system, as well as a flute of some kind.

“Oh, and don’t come down from the ceiling. There is to be no fighting. You’ll endanger yourself again, you know? Just get us some info, and get the hell back here. Once our side has the info, if we wanted to charge in, we’d be able to. If you mess up, and find yourself in a pinch, blow that flute.”

“Yes. I understand.”

With a clear goal now, Fii immediately began making her way through the vents.

Fairly quickly, and soundlessly too. It took no time at all until Crow could no longer see her.

Being small wasn't enough. If she wasn't incredibly flexible, something like this would have been impossible.

She was almost like a cat.

Heath herself hadn't noticed, but in the entirety of the knight order, it was probably only her who could have done this.

You could even say that it was her talent.

"Looks like Roy's eyes were dead-on."

Crow scratched his head, as he saw off the apprentice who was like a little brother to him.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 29

After continuing into the vents for a while, traces of light began leaking in from below.

When she looked into the cracks there, she could see a hallway in the manor. A number of rough looking men were walking about with weapons at the ready. Clearly not what you would expect from the villa of some rich man.

(It was just like Crow said. This really is a hideout for the kidnappers. I have to find the captives.) Fii continued to quietly move about the ventilation system. Because it wasn't designed for humans to move about it, it took quite some flexibility.

Fii had naturally been quite flexible. And because of the training menu designed to further hone that, it became possible for her now to move so quickly and quietly.

Normally it would be frightening to enter a small cramped space, but perhaps because she grew up in the shadows, Fii didn't mind it. It made her a little sad to consider that perhaps she was suited to these places, so she decided to stop thinking about it.

More than anything, her desire to be helpful to the Captain spurred her on.

After stealthily traversing the ceilings of the manor, Fii came to a conclusion.

(It isn't on the first floor...)

She had gone through every suspicious room to check, but there weren't any signs of people being held inside.

Fii skilfully turned her body a half revolution, so that she was now facing up, and used the light from below to read the map.

There was no cellar.

(The 2nd floor it is.)

She checked the map for the location where the ceiling space led to the second floor.

Once she knew where to go, she set off.

However, there was a small miscalculation here.

The truth was that Fii's participation today was just to test things out. If she couldn't fit into the vents well, then she couldn't fit. If they weren't on the first floor, then they weren't on the first floor. That was all well and good, they thought.

That's why Crow had made sure to tell her not to leave the ceiling.

Neither Roy nor Crow could have expected that she was capable of invading the second floor.

But Fii really did it.

Making use of her light body, she scaled the walls to each side of her with climbing skills that nobody taught her.

But what drove her the most was her determination.

(For the Captain!)

When her fingers touched the rim of the shaft, and she made her appearance on the second floor vents, Fii snorted proudly.

After searching for a while...

(Found them...)

It took a while, but she had finally located it. The room where all the trafficking victims were being held.

From what Fii could see, there were about 10 women and children in there with their limbs tied up.

All of them hung their heads with dark expressions. Some of them were swollen and red around the eyes, as though they had been crying.

(I'll save you all.)

Fii decided to mark the area on her map, and return.

But before she could do so, the room to the door opened with a sound, and

two men walked in from the hallway.

One seemed to be a merchant. The other seemed to be an armed guard. Perhaps the former was even Khanzar.

With a smirk, he looked over the women and children for a while before nodding.

“Not bad. We have more than ten of them here. I’ll probably make quite a bit.”

Suddenly, a small figure appeared behind the satisfied merchant. Fii didn’t know if the restraints had come loose naturally, or if they had been made loose, but one of the children tried to escape. He had likely been waiting for the door to open.

(You can’t...!)

The child was still visible to the armed man. It took no effort at all to catch the child, and the guard hoisted him into the air by the arm.

“UWAHHHHHHHHH!” screamed the child.

“Is this kid retarded?” scoffed the man, “Khanzar-sama, what should I do with ‘em?”

After staring at the child for a few seconds, Khanzar replied without much interest, “Make an example out of it. I don’t care if it dies. It’s a boy, so it wouldn’t make much anyway.”

“Understood. Hehe, don’t blame me if you die, brat. It’s your own fault.”

The guard raised a fist.

(Don’t mess with me...!)

Fii felt her body flushing with heat. And then found her body moving by itself. She moved right to the entrance to the room and jumped down without hesitation.

“Wha-, who-!?”

“Mn...?”

Khanzar raised a scream of surprise at the sudden intruder, but because Fii had

appeared in the guard's blindspot, he was slow to react.

Without drawing the sword that Galluzzi armed her with, she struck it against the guard with all her might.

He swayed, but didn't collapse.

(It's okay, I expected this!)

Fii held up the sword again.

In the match with Gorms, she realised her lack of strength. So she practised so that she could strike twice in quick succession.

"Ei!"

Although he withstood the first blow, the second knocked him out.

"W-, Who the hell are... hehuh-!?"

Khanzar seemed to be saying something, but Fii simply swung the blunt weapon once again.

This time it only took one strike.

Although she managed to defeat the pair, there were now loud shouts from outside.

"I heard some weird noises!"

"That's the room with the captives!"

The loud sounds of footsteps drew closer.

(Oh crap...)

Fii quickly cut through the bindings on the captives.

"I've come to save you! Please help!"

She got everybody to move the drawers in front of the door to form a barricade.

"Oi, what the!?"

"Fuck, it isn't opening. Khanzar-sama!?"

The men banged on the door from outside.

"There's something in front of the door!"

“Break the fuck through it!”

(Kuh, this isn't good...)

Because the room was unused, the drawers were empty and not very heavy. Everybody was now pushing the door shut, but Fii was light, and the women and children were no better. Not only that, but because of their time in captivity, they were all feeling weak.

On the other hand, the force pushing it open was getting stronger and stronger.

More and more people were pushing from the outside.

At that time, Fii noticed a flute in her vision. It was the one that Crow had given her.

(Sorry, Captain! Crow-san! Please save me!) Placing it into her mouth, she blew with all her might.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 30

After hiding the unconscious guards, Crow waited for Heath as he watched the surroundings.

While he did, a shrill, -piiiiiiiiiii- reached his ears.

(It's the flute I gave Heath!)

He immediately searched for the position of its origin.
And then realised that it was on the second floor.

(That idiot...! Why up there...!)

Roy and Orbull flew out from the forest.
Roy wasted no time in asking Crow,

"Where's Heath?"

"Probably up there!"

Crow pointed to a room on the second floor.

"The second floor..."

Roy's face twisted into a frown.
They could even hear the guards from outside, rushing into the manor. At this rate, Heath was in danger.
Roy immediately made his decision.

"Orbull. Please become my spring, and throw me up."

Orbull immediately nodded in consent.
After Orbull stood near the room that Heath seemed to be in, Roy sprinted towards Orbull. And then he jumped.
Landing on Orbull's thick arms, he jumped again with all his might, and his body was sent soaring into the air.

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Fii had continued to desperately hold back the barricade.
But she was out of time...
The force from the other side was too much now. After so many hammer-like blows, both the door and the shelf were in tatters.

(Then I'll force my way out!)

With a bang, the door finally gave way.
Although Fii was flung back, she rolled and recovered, immediately standing up.
First, she analysed her surroundings. Five men were by the door.
The odds were almost impossible.

(But there's no choice but to do it...!)

Of the people here, only Fii was capable of fighting.
Gathering her determination, just as Fii set up her sword guard...
The sound of a window breaking came from behind.

A man had flown into the room.
It only took a glance for her to realise who it was.

"Captain!"

"Heath. Fall back."

After giving a command, York lowered his body, and then sprung into action like a panther. It only took one stroke to sink the five dumbfounded men.
With one eye-catching strike, he turned around the situation.

A few seconds later, Crow leapt into the same room.

"Whoawhoaa. That was fucking dangerous! York! How is it? Can we escape?"

"No. Heath aside, the women and children won't be able to. We'll wait for them here."

"Yeah, thought so!"

"Let's go."

Crow had stumbled a little when he landed, but once he drew his sword, his expression showed no less intensity than York's.

The duo stood a little diagonally to the broken door, and immediately cut down the enemies once they passed through.

Their sword skills made them seem like gods of war.

(Amazing... I have to help too...) thought Fii.

But just as she was about to move,

“”Heath! You sit still!””

Despite them facing the other way, for some reason the two called out to her. Fii decided to untie the rest of the captives.

The hired goons tried to defeat the two knights as well, but the small frame of the door hindered the advantage their numbers gave them.

Even if they charged through the door, neither York nor Crow would lose just because it was two versus one.

“Kuh! Can’t break through!”

Just as some man had said that, the roar of a boom reverberated through the air.

“A cannon!? It can’t be that there are other soldiers!?”

The sound scared the men who were still conscious, and some began to flee. But neither York nor Crow failed to intercept them.

Close to ten people were brought down when they went for the door.

“Hii! Run for it!”

“These guys are monsters!”

The men who managed to make it down the corridor, all the way to the bend, were suddenly sent flying from the side by some mass of metal.

With steady steps, Orbull appeared from the shadows of the corridor. In his hand was a cannon.

Although some of them probably escaped, the majority of the people in the manor had been taken down by these three.

Orbull turned in Heath’s direction and, with a grin, gave her a thumbs up.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 31

defeating all the enemies, Crow and York turned to Fii.

"Captain... Crow-san..."

Moved, Fii moved to rush over to the two of them.

But when she did, Crow's fist slammed down on her head.

"Heath! I told you not to leave the ceiling!"

Crow was really angry now. When a face as handsome as his was warped in anger, it seemed all the scarier.

"I, I'm sorry... But this kid was in danger, and I had to save him..."

"Don't bully Oniichan! He saved me!"

The boy came to her aid.

But Crow's anger wouldn't settle.

"A violation of orders, is a violation of orders! Do you even know how much danger you were in! The basis of being in a unit is obeying commands from above! Didn't you learn this from your instructor!"

"Yes..."

Crow was right, of course. Fii's voice grew quiet.

Now that she was calm, she realised she endangered not only herself, but the three who came to save her as well. When she came to that realisation, it felt like her body was paralysed.

But even so, she didn't think that she would have been able to abandon the child...

Fii's heart was filled with questions.

Orbull walked up to the enraged Crow and tapped him on the shoulder, shaking his head.

The paper that he held up read, “Beginners do this all the time. You’re too angry. Heath is listening to you already.”

But even so, Crow was still angry.

“If we didn’t come here, this guy would have been killed, you know!”

In the end, Crow was angry because he was worried for her.

It really was dangerous, after all.

Had they been late in their raid, Heath might have been killed.

At this point, York took a step forward.

Everybody’s gazes settled on him.

“Heath.”

“Yes...”

“When one moves as a unit, there are times when the “right thing” is not the “right course of action”. If you don’t have enough power, there are times when you need to abandon your righteousness. And I recall telling you earlier that to gain that power, you need time.”

Fii nodded at his words.

“I’m sure you’re still at a loss as to what you should have done.”

“Yes...”

To be honest, that was exactly what was in her heart.

She wanted to save the child. But despite that, she didn’t have the strength to do so on her own. Instead, she got everybody else involved, and brought them into a crisis.

“To find an answer to that, you first need to know your own strength. With your current strength, you won’t have the option of saving them.

“You risked your life. You risked your comrades. You saved the child. And you saved the captives. All of these are the results of your actions today. Do not forget a single one.

“You’re still growing. There’s no need to find an answer today. Become a fine knight, so that you’ll find the answer one day. Until then, we’ll try and follow up on your mistakes as best we can.”

“I understand.”

The problem that Fii met with today, was one that every knight had gone through before.

Crow, York, Orbull. None of them were exceptions. Each one of them had thought and agonised about it, and they had come up with their own answers from the strength they had today.

You could even say that this answer was what made them knights.

Fii nodded seriously at York's words, and swore never to forget them.

As for Crow, it seemed like he had finally calmed down.

But the Captain's words didn't end there.

“But a violation of orders, is a violation of orders. You will be punished.”

“EEH!?”

Fii had no problem with the punishment itself, but because she had thought that York was done talking, a cry escaped her due to the surprise.

Next to York, Crow could be seen nodding in satisfaction.

“Incidentally, the punishment extends to all of us.”

“EEH!?”

This time was Crow's turn to be surprised.

“Why!”

“We made a huge mistake this time in underrating Heath's abilities. Neither did we teach him the right attitude and resolution needed for a rescue mission. All members are responsible.”

“Guh...”

Crow couldn't argue back.

Because today had just been a test, he hadn't thought much about it.

Thinking back, he was lax in his explanations as well.

It was the job of the knights to teach the apprentices the mental state and resolution they required.

The plan had been to call it off if it seemed like things would be dangerous. But

it went unexpectedly well, and because Crow just left Heath to her own devices, they ended up with this result.

What's more, the reason the mistake got even bigger was because Heath's abilities had far exceeded their expectations.

Crow roughly scratched at his head, and apologised to Fii.

"It's true that I was too naive. Sorry for being angry without seeing my own faults, Heath."

"No, not at all. You didn't do anything wrong."

Fii shook her head.

"Well then, the punishment is as follows————"

"EEEEEEEEHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!?"

Fii thought she was prepared for any manner of harsh punishments, but when York gave the announcement, a scream escaped her lips.

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That night, Fii was collapsed over her table as she wept.

"Oh? Heath, you aren't eating?" asked Remié, as he came over with a tray. Heath probably enjoyed eating more than any of them, so it was strange to see her without food.

"Apparently he violated some orders, and has to go without dinner for three nights as punishment..."

Since Fii didn't even have the will to talk any more, Geith answered in her stead.

The punishment that York announced was to go without dinner for three nights. To Fii, who liked eating more than any of the recruits in the Northern Dormitory, it was a terribly harsh punishment.

"All members are forbidden to eat dinner for three nights. In exchange, make sure to eat properly at breakfast." the Captain had said.

Fii started to stare enviously at the stew Remié was eating.

“W-, Want some...? I don’t think anybody will know if it’s just a bite...”

As he broke into a cold sweat at Fii’s intense gaze, he offered a spoon to her. But Fii shook her head.

“No, it’s fine.”

She wouldn’t break a promise with the Captain.

But once Slad arrived and began eating his hamburg steak, Fii once again shedding tears of envy.

“Uuuuuu, I’m so hungryyyyy, guys... I’m so jealoussss, guys...”

(You could have just not come to the cafeteria...)

Everybody in the room seemed to share that thought.

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In a night life district, Crow placed his hands together and apologised to a wilful-looking woman.

“Soz. I can’t go have dinner anymore!”

“Hahh!? You promised me that you would take me to a delicious dinner! You had time to come here, didn’t you! Explain to me why!”

The woman’s face flushed red in anger.

“Ahh, well, I just don’t have much appetite right now. I’ve already a reservation, so if you want, could you go by yourself?”

The woman immediately exploded into a slap.

“Don’t mess with me! I won’t ever accept a date with you again!”

Her heels clicked against the ground as she stormed away.

Because she was strong-willed, Crow found her enjoyable to talk to, so he quite liked her as a dating partner. But she was also proud. It was likely that she wouldn’t accept another invitation from him.

“Well, can’t be helped, huh...”

Watching her leave, Crow sighed, and for a moment flashed a bitter smile.

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In the 18th Division's meeting place, Orbull watered a pot plant. The flowers were blooming beautifully, and he seemed to be enjoying himself today as well.

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That night, Roy continued to work at his desk.

"Your Majesty. It is about time to leave for your dinner with Her Highness, Queen Fiiru," asked an official.

As though suddenly remembering, Roy replied,

"Aah, sorry. I forgot to mention. Please let them know that I'm not having dinner tonight."

"Sorry!?"

In his disbelief, the official asked again. After thinking for a little, Roy replied once more.

"Please just give my portion tonight to the chefs or somebody. And send my apologies to Queen Fiiru as well. For the next two days also, there is no need to make me dinner."

"Y-, Yes..."

Although he didn't understand the point of it, the official nodded. Saying nothing further, Roy began to move his pen again.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 32

week later, after the dinner ban had been lifted, Fii once again came to the 18th Division's meeting place.

When she entered, Conrad-san was there, as expected. After exchanging greetings as usual, he made some tea for her. Today's was chamomile. It was calming, and just a little sweet, so it really made her relax somehow.

While she was enjoying it, Conrad spoke from the seat opposite her:

"Today you'll be going on a mission with me, so let's get along, Heath-chan!"

before giving her a wink.

"Eh...?"

Fii was dumbfounded.

Conrad gave her an unreadable smile in return, and after resting his hands in his palms, as the table supported his elbows, he looked up at Fii.

"Goodness, you're so mean, Heath-chan. It's almost as though your expression is saying——I never expected the words 'mission' to come out of this guy's mouth——or something like that. Why, that makes me sound like a chronic laze-about or something."

(He read my thoughts!?)

Fii felt goosebumps rise on her back.

"I-, I'm sorry. But, it's because you're always here when I come."

"That's because I wanted to have tea with you, you see~"

Seeing Conrad's sweet smile, Fii thought to herself that perhaps he really *was* just a laze-about.

Even Crow who always looked after Fii would sometimes be out helping other

divisions, but Conrad could win a reward for perfect attendance.

“So, what is this mission then?”

“Aah, we’re just going to head out to town for a little. There’s still some tea left, so let’s enjoy the tea first.”

The whole conversation lacked any of the suspense you would expect from two people about to head off on a mission.

(Are we going to buy groceries or something...?)

Even though it should have been impossible, for some reason Fii felt it possible instead.

After the two finished leisurely drinking the tea, they headed out the castle gate.

The centre of town was filled with orderly stone buildings, but Conrad took Fii somewhere a little further out, where the stone was replaced by wood.

And unlike the lower city parts that she and the other apprentices would go shopping in, this place gave off a somewhat dangerous atmosphere.

Fii couldn’t help but look left and right restlessly. Seeing this, Conrad chuckled and warned,

“You shouldn’t look so restless. You’ll attract somebody dangerous, you know.”

Having been told that, Fii stopped it.

Apparently it really *was* a dangerous place.

In the end, they arrived at a worn-down inn.

It was a two-story wooden building, but parts of the walls were modified here and there, and it gave off a deserted feeling. And rightfully so, because there was no signs of anybody at all.

When they entered, there was an old person sitting at the counter. They were visibly blind. Without saying a word, Conrad simply placed gold on the counter, and headed further in.

(Uwahh!)

It was a huge amount of money, unthinkable for a stay at an inn.

It was three times larger than her monthly salary as an apprentice knight.

As for the old person, they simply accepted the money silently.

Fii also realised that it wasn't the right place to talk, so she followed Conrad in without a sound.

After climbing up the stairs, there were roughly six rooms on the second floor. As usual, there were no signs of life.

Conrad suddenly handed some clothing to her.

It was a butler outfit, sized for a young boy. A white shirt and vest, with a black tie, and black pants. There was no jacket.

"Change in this room. I'll be changing too."

Conrad indicated one of the rooms, before heading into the neighbouring one.

(What's going on...)

Fii didn't really understand, but when she began to change, she realised that the clothing fit her perfectly.

Naturally, she was left in wonder.

But since thinking about it would yield no answers, she left the room. Conrad wasn't done yet.

But it didn't take long until the door to his room opened.

And a peerless beauty appeared.

Long, striking red hair, and large almond eyes, adorned with long lashes. Skin, white like china, with just a single dash of red, made her face a work of art. By her mouth, she held a folding fan, feathered and luxurious. The dress which opened daringly at her breast, enveloped her slender, but full body, and the charm that she exuded caused even Fii's female heart to pound.

Above all, she was giving off an incredibly nice smell. Fii unconsciously sniffed.

After Fii had had her fill of being charmed by the bewitching beauty, the beauty snapped the fan shut, and spoke.

"I've kept you waiting, Heath-chan."

It was Conrad-san's voice...

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 33

"You were a girl, Conrad-san!?" screamed Fii.

Conrad simply gave his usual unreadable smile, before replying in his usual, care-free voice.

"Gosh, Heath-chan! I'm a man, a man. Can't you tell from my voice?"

Certainly, Conrad did have a man's voice if you listened carefully, but he didn't exude any particular manliness. Or rather, he didn't exude anything at all, Fii thought.

With him dressed like this, for a moment it seemed like he had no masculinity to him at all.

(And more importantly...)

Fii's eyes were glued to one spot.

Under that daring dress, peeking through that daring opening, it was definitely there.

A bewitching ravine that incited the instincts of men, and even drew in the gaze of women.

(How on earth did he do that...?) Unknowingly, Fii had stared for quite a long time. Conrad seemed to watch her do so in amusement.

"Shall I teach you how?"

"No thank you."

Fii shook her head.

Conrad gave Fii a look up and down, and nodded.

"Yep. You look great. Totally cute. Hm, maybe just a finishing touch."

With that, Conrad pulled out a make-up kit from who knows where, and fiddled with Fii's face and hair.

“How’s this?”

When Fii checked with the hand mirror Conrad produced, she found that her whole impression changed, even though Conrad hadn’t touched her for long. Normally, Fii’s face had a cheerful and energetic feel to it. But now, she somehow seemed like a quiet boy, who had a somewhat ephemeral atmosphere to him. Her hair was smoother than usual, which just emphasized her daintiness. Even the hair colour had changed. Fii’s blonde hair had a tinge of red now.

“When you have light hair, it’s easier to add in other colours. Don’t worry. It comes off quite easily. Or rather, you should actually be careful of water while we’re on the mission, okay?”

Apparently even that was possible. And so, Fii had completely changed at the hand of Conrad.

“Looks like we’re ready.”

Conrad put on a veiled, and expensive-looking hat. Now, he seemed like a suspicious noblewoman, travelling incognito. Not only that, but the glimpses of his chin and red lips from under the veil emphasised that he was a beauty.

Now that their preparations were complete, Conrad once again brought the fan by his lips.

“Well then, shall we go?”

This time, the voice he spoke with was beautiful, bewitching, and exactly like a real woman’s.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 34

ter leaving the inn, the next place they arrived at was an even more suspicious-looking building.

It was in good-condition; rare, for a building in these parts, and there were men standing guard outside. A clearly dangerous place. Conrad approached unhesitatingly.

When the men saw the cross-dressing Conrad, the men standing guards gave an ill-fit smile, and bowed.

“Why if it isn’t Menué-sama. Are you looking for Luboera-sama?”

“Yes. I’ve come to make another purchase. Could you perhaps let me in?”

“Yes. Luboera-sama said that you could enter whenever you want. Please come inside.”

The man lowered his head respectfully, and beckoned the cross-dressing Conrad into the building. It was then, that he first noticed the boy in the butler outfit behind Conrad.

“Menué-sama, who might this child be?”

The moment they saw the child, the men became a little more guarded. They lowered their stance a little, and moved their right hands behind their backs. There was probably some weapon hidden back there.

Conrad spoke to them in a small voice, that seemed to have not noticed this fact.

“He’s my butler. Aren’t you, Soshia?”

Soshia. It was the alias that they had prepared in advance for her. Fii had been standing with her head hung bashfully. When Conrad called for her name, she lowered it further into a tiny nod.

‘Soshia’ was supposed to be a mute.

“I’m sorry. This boy can’t speak.”

“A butler... is he...”

“That’s right. Isn’t he such a good boy?”

“Yes. You have very splendid taste,” replied the man with an ingratiating smile.

How could such a young boy be able to fulfil the job of a butler. Not only that, one that couldn’t speak.

Conrad could read between the lines, but ‘Menué’ was a thick noblewoman, and didn’t notice at all.

“Uhuhu, I can bring him with me, can’t I? It’d be pitiful to leave him behind.”

“Yes, that’s completely fine.”

With their permission, Conrad brought Fii into the shop.

The first floor was a bar. The curtains were shut, making the place dim, illuminated only by faint red and blue lamps. And despite it being morning, men and women were drinking, thriving in the environment.

But the place that Fii and Conrad were heading was not there.

Apparently the guards out front had sent some kind of signal, because somebody appeared from inside and greeted Conrad.

“Welcome, welcome, Lady Menué. Please allow me to escort you to Luboera-sama.”

The two of them were brought further into the shop. After passing through a dreary corridor, unlike the colourful bar, they continued up a flight of stairs to the second floor. It did have a few paintings and vases, but you could hardly call the place tasteful.

They were even placed badly. The guide almost knocked into a vase as he passed.

Eventually they reached a hallway with a door at the end. In front of it, stood two burly men. It seemed that this room, deep into the building, was the manager’s room.

When the two of them reached the door, the man opened the door and let

them in.

Upon entering, the guards entered behind them, and shut the door.

“Welcome, Menué-sama! It brings my great honour that you visit my store again!”

A plump man with a short moustache had greeted them with an exaggerated spread of his arms. There was too much hair gel applied to his head, and an unpleasant smell wafted from him.

It was the manager of this place, Luboera.

“Uhuhu, I tried other stores too, but I didn’t much like them. So I’ve come back here, Luboera,” said Conrad.

His voice had been abundant in seductiveness, and he lightly tapped his lips with his closed fan.

When he did, the slight wind from it gently lifted Conrad’s veil, and half of that bewitching face could be seen. And the lecherous expression Luboera made when he saw it, did not escape Fii’s eyes.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 35

"I'm proud of our range. I have confidence that we will find you the slave that you want. Now please, sit down, Madam."

Luboera ushered Conrad to a chair, before sitting down opposite him.

Fii finally knew what this place was. If the earlier manor was the slave warehouse, then this place was the shopfront.

"What kind of slave are you looking for?"

"Let me see, perhaps one with black hair this time."

"In that case, how about this one? They're descended from the people in that faraway Kingdom of Baharat."

Luboera spread out documents on various slaves in front of Conrad. While he did so, he would take glances at the valley at Conrad's chest, as well the nape visible beneath the veil, but Conrad showed no signs of noticing.

"Heyy, it's really too difficult to tell from just these pictures. Couldn't I see the real thing?"

"Lately, the management has gotten stricter, you see. It's probably impossible to move the slaves. Things were so much better, back when the old king was on the throne..."

"How terrible."

"Exactly as you say. A true noble should have a taste for both nice hobbies and bad hobbies, like you Madam."

"Huhu, quite true."

"But please be at ease. Our shop has a long, long history in selling slaves to nobles. We are different to those big companies like Firem, who have no sense of business ethic. The artist we hired for the portraits is very skilled, and I assure

you that the slaves look exactly like the images.”

Fii grew angry as she listened.

(What ‘long history’ ... All you do is kidnap people...)

She wanted to send him flying. But she couldn’t let herself get in the way of Conrad’s mission. So she endured.

Besides, two men were standing guard behind them, each overwhelmingly bigger than Conrad.

While Fii was thinking this, the disguised Conrad seemed to think for a while, before picking one of the slaves from the papers.

“Then I’ll go with this one.”

“This one? As expected of you, you have a good eye.”

“How much?”

“Good question. This one is roughly 50,000,000 Melk.”

“My. Isn’t that even higher than last time?”

“You see, management has gotten stricter since. Just recently a warehouse was destroyed. It wasn’t one of ours, but unless we raise the prices by about this much, we really won’t get by.”

In response to those words, Conrad furrowed his brows, and acted so coquettishly that it almost seemed forced.

“I’m so troubled. The other day I used up all my money on jewels and a dress. Heyy, couldn’t you lower it some?”

The bewitching voice reached his ears, and his face betrayed his interest.

“E-Even if you ask me that...”

Conrad leant in towards him with natural movements. The sweet scent of perfume wafted into his nostrils.

“Then how about this? Bring it down to 40,000,000 Melk. In exchange for the remainder... You. Can. Have. Me.”

Conrad placed his body weight against Luboera. He casually pushed back the

veil, and showed his beautiful face to Luboera.

“M-Madam, I thought you were only interest in young boys...”

“I love cute boys, you know... But I also like, older, skilled, men, like you. Am I perhaps very strange...?”

“No, not at all...”

By now, his expression had turned completely aroused, and had fallen for Conrad’s wiles.

He showed no resistance towards Conrad’s advances.

“Heyy, it’s a little... embarrassing...”

“Oh?”

Conrad’s finger was pointed at the two men standing on guard.

“Wouldn’t it be fine to have them leave? It’s a waste of our time together.”

“Oi, you two. Get out.”

Luboera agreed in a blink.

The two men left the door.

At that point, Luboera once again remembered the boy in the butler clothing.

“Madam, is that boy...?”

not going to leave? he was about to ask, but Conrad placed his two white hands on Luboera’s cheeks, and then gave a beautiful, bewitching smile.

“That boy is going to watch us. Do you not like that sort of thing?”

The boy in butler clothes flushed red and he nodded.

Fii’s blushing was real.

Conrad’s sexy voice and flirting, as well as the sensual atmosphere he made, all caused Fii to turn hang her head with a red face.

“No, I do. You truly have wonderful preferences...”

Fii didn’t know what Luboera was imagining, but he readily agreed with Conrad. Their two faces got closer and closer.

By now, Fii felt like she was hysteric.

“Well then, time to make you feel very, very good.”

Conrad’s seductive voice reached Fii’s ears.

“GYUH-”

After making a weird noise, Luboera’s head slumped.

When Fii raised her gaze, she found him unconscious. Conrad’s finger was pressed against his neck.

Placing his body on the floor, and making sure he was really under, Conrad stood up and spoke to Fii.

“Now then, time to do our job. Don’t be too noisy, okay?” said Conrad, as he held a finger against his lips, and gave Fii his usual wink.

“Did you strangle him...?”

“Yup.”

(Just what did he to do knock him out in that instant...?)

Fii found it unbelievable that Conrad’s slender, beautiful fingers, could possibly do that.

After confirming it for herself, she muttered in a small voice.

“Is this really okay...?”

“It’s fine. After I have him a special perfume to arouse him, I strangled him into unconsciousness in a way that made him feel good. He should be having a great dream right about now,” chuckled Conrad.

Fii had a closer look, and found that Luboera’s expression did look somewhat happen, and from his lips came mutters of “Menué-sama... Gehehe...”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 36

After that, Fii and Conrad scoured letters and various documents to gather information on things like where the slaves were being hidden, or which shops were conspirators.

“It really is easier with somebody else with me. But even this idiot didn’t keep something as dangerous as a client list,” said Conrad, as he crossed his legs, and skimmed through the papers.

Apparently Luboera didn’t have the information they wanted most. It wouldn’t be too difficult to simply lock up the vendors, but the problem was getting the buyers.

Most of them were from ancient and powerful noble families. It would be hard to have royal soldiers search their territories. Not only that, but many of the slaves were falsified as ‘live-in servants’.

“Well, it looks like a few people are still finished though.”

Conrad smiled, as he flapped the letters in his hand.

“Now then, since we have proof, let’s go home.”

Conrad stood up from the chair, and Fii followed behind him. The two of them put back the papers to where they found them. After Conrad put on his veiled hat, he left the room with an innocent look.

The two guards stared hard at the two, but Conrad turned around, and smiled with only his mouth visible.

“Tell Luboera that I had a fantastic time. Ah, but later, since he doesn’t want you inside for a while.”

When Conrad gave a giggle, the cheeks of the guards dyed red. After that, just like when he arrived, Conrad boldly and elegantly walked down the hallway.

And Fii followed behind him.

By now, Fii's nervousness had left her.
After all, the only thing left to do was leave the shop.

Unfocused, her shoulder clipped a badly placed vase.
It tilted towards her.

Fii tried to stop it, but water spilled from its mouth to her head.

"Uwah-!"

She screamed in reflex, before covering her mouth in panic.

(I'm not supposed to be able to talk...!)

Her heart started pounding.

"Are you okay!?"

The guards were coming over. It wasn't because of suspicious.
Apparently they didn't know about her being a mute. Fii felt relieved.
But...

The water dripping down from her hair was red.
The wet parts of her hair had changed back to her original colour.

"Why is your hair dyed... Come with us for a little."

The two guards tried to bring Fii to Luboera's room.

(Oh no...!)

In panic, Fii avoided their arms.
Immediately, she tried to knock them out to avoid alerting more guards.
But she had no weapons...

Since it was an infiltration mission, she left her sword. Unarmed, Fii had no way to deal with these large men.

(What do I...)

"This kid is resisting!"

"He's completely suspicious! Let's get him!"

Now that they had seen her resist, they began to attack her for real.

Fii avoided their knives in a fluster.

(What do I do...?!)

She had fallen into a huge pinch because of a little carelessness. Because of her panic, she wasn't thinking properly. Not only that, but she even got Conrad involved because of her failure.

Fii couldn't think of any way to break out of this. Far from it, at this rate she would be finished if more people came.

At that point, Conrad suddenly appeared out of nowhere, and stepped gracefully in between Fii and the men.

His movements were unbefitting of the atmosphere, almost like royalty, and attracted the gazes of both Fii and the guards.

Having taken off his veiled hat at some point, Conrad looked up at the guards and gave an angelic smile.

Their eyes seemed to be glued to that beautiful expression. At that moment, Conrad's hands approached them from a blind spot and strangled their necks. Despite their size difference, the guards were lifting cleanly off the ground.

Fii could hear the dull noises of constriction. The two guards began frothing at the mouth as they lost consciousness.

The instant change left Fii in shock.

"Conrad-san..."

Turning around, Conrad gave her his usual, kind smile.

"This served as a good lesson, Heath-chan. When you're on an infiltration mission, a moment of carelessness can mean your life."

"I'm sorry, I..."

"It's okay. It's quite common to have unexpected developments like this one. What's important is to deal with them. I'll fix things this time, so you just stay there quietly."

Leaving those words, Conrad left the hallway with elegant movements. Attracted by the sounds, some other people had arrived.

“Menué-sama, what was that noise...?”

“Uhuhu, my butler accidentally broke a vase.”

The sounds of a peaceful conversation, and then more dull sounds of constriction, reached Fii’s ears.

A few minutes later...

“I’m done~”

Still as elegant as ever, Conrad returned to Fii. He hadn’t even broken a sweat.

“I’ve pretty much gotten all of them, so let’s head back.”

“Umm... I’m really sorry...”

This time was a huge failure.

Fii was feeling depressed.

“It’s fine. I thought I would let them swim free for a little longer, but I was going to report them soon anyway, so there’s no real problem. More importantly———”

Conrad approached Fii, and stroked her cheek.

There was a small cut there, from when she failed to completely avoid a knife.

“You really have to take care of your face. You’re a girl, after all.”

“Ah-, yes...”

She nodded for an instant, but once she digested the words in her head, Fii shook her head in a great fluster.

“NONO! I’M A GUY!”

Conrad gave an impish smile as he watched Fii’s reaction.

“I’m an expert in disguises, you know. Did you really think you could fool me with your half-baked cross-dressing? But well, I suppose none of those other blockheads have noticed, though.”

Apparently she had been outed a long time ago. Fii was completely shocked. And at the same time, she felt relieved that apparently nobody else had noticed.

“Umm... If possible, could you keep this a secret...?”

“That’s fine. It’s funnier this way.”

Conrad gave his ready consent. But ‘funnier’...? Fii was now plagued with a different kind of anxiety.

Together, the two of them headed for the shop exit.
Every person in the shop had been strangled into unconsciousness.

(All of this, unarmed...!?)

A cold sweat ran down Fii’s back as she observed this unbelievable scene.
When they finally left the shop, the only one left was the guard outside.
Apparently he hadn’t noticed any of the events inside the shop, and stood there just like when Fii first arrived.

“Why if it isn’t Menué-sama———”

The moment that the guard turned their way, Conrad reached for his neck in an instant, and stole his consciousness too.
Conrad dragged the man along for a little, before tossing him into an alley.

“Now then, let’s alert the knights, and have these guys arrested, shall we?”
slapped Conrad, as she smiled at Fii.

“Yes...” nodded Fii, as his smile gave her another cold sweat.

Today, Fii learned three things.
First, was that Conrad-san was an incredibly fearsome person.

Second, was that he was actually a very busy person.
It was after they alerted the knights, and headed back to the castle that she knew.
Apparently he regularly disguised himself, and infiltrated crime syndicates for information.
Because of that, he was the one who had the least time in the 18th’s gathering place. Apparently Conrad purposefully adjusted his schedule, so that he could be there when Fii was.
As for why he went to so much trouble, it was apparently because watching Fii was fun...

Finally, the third thing she learnt was...

“How was it, today?”

“It was tiring because of all the shock and nervousness. And I failed too...”

“Huhu, good. But you really don’t have to worry about your failure. I brought you along because I wanted you to get a feel for infiltration.”

“I see.”

When they returned to the castle, the two of them were the centre of attention.

And naturally so. Because one of them was a peerless beauty .

Fii had immediately changed, and returned to her apprentice knight’s outfit. But Conrad was still cross-dressing, and walking about as a woman.

Because he had taken off his veil, the gazes of the Capital’s men were all nailed to him.

And under these gazes, for some reason Conrad seemed 20% happier than usual.

Watching this, Fii was sure now.

(This person’s penchant for cross-dressing has nothing to do with his mission...)

Today was the day that Fii finally got to know Conrad.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 37

Fii stared enviously as the other apprentices happily talked to each other.

"They finally taught me it! The Five-Step Parade Thrust!"

"The heck is that? The Diagonal Spin Slash I got taught is way better."

"You guys are dumb. My 15th Division Special is the best!"

The boys were talking about "secret techniques".

Apparently the seniors in the other divisions had been teaching them lately. The apprentices all showed off their techniques with their wooden swords. And while they were boasting and smiling about it, Fii's eyes glittered as she watched them.

A secret technique boom had gripped the apprentices of the Northern Dormitory.

Pretty much all the apprentices had learnt something from their seniors, and right now they were having a great time discussing whose was best.

"How nice... I want one too..."

Fii could only watch on enviously with a thumb in her mouth.

Nobody in the 18th Division had taught her anything like that. That's why she couldn't participate in the discussion at all.

Next to her, Gorms looked on, astounded.

"Are they retards. How can you use any of that stuff in a real battle. And you, if you have time to watch them, go swing your sword."

With that, both Fii and Gorms began sword training.

But even so, Fii's longing for a secret technique didn't die down.

"Gorms! Tomorrow I'm going to go learn a secret technique too!"

"You, were you even listening to me...? That shit's completely useless, you know."

Covered in sweat, Fii clenched a fist in some kind of determination as she practised the sword. Gorms just looked at her, fed up.

From Gorms' point of view, even the relatively simpler 'secret techniques' that began the whole fad might not work in real combat. By now, the techniques they showed off took seconds to prepare, seconds to use, and had not even a speck of practicality to them.

If you tried using them in a match or battle, at best you'd have the shit beaten out of you during the many openings.

(Even the people teaching this stuff are getting carried away...) But Fii held a completely different opinion.

"Because I'm just so envious! I want to do it too!"

Despite Gorms' reasoning, Fii was still determined to learn one. They were just really cool, after all. And they looked fun too. More important than anything, it was kind of like building bonds with their division members, which made Fii feel touched. And envious. Very envious.

"I'm definitely going to learn it tomorrow. The 18th Division Special..."

"Ahh... Just do whatever you want... Just make sure not to get me involved. Also, don't come up with your own techniques."

Since Fii's enthusiasm seemed unstoppable, Gorms decided to give up. He decided not to get involved any further with his friend who had been brainwashed by retards.

"Alright! Then in that case, next week we'll show each other our new secret techniques, Gorms!"

"I told you I wasn't gunna do it! Fucking listen to people! What 'in that case'!"

Far from giving up on it, Fii even tried to wrap Gorms up, and was rewarded with a bellow for it.

妹

And so, the next day, Fii appeared before Crow first.

He was a chronic pick-up artist, but Fii knew that he was a really amazing person. Not only that, he was good at looking after others, and for some reason

paid a lot of attention to Fii.

He would definitely teach her something cool, she thought.

“Crow-san! Please teach me a secret technique!”

Fii gave a fist pump in front of her chest.

Crow placed a hand to his chin, and seemed to fall into thought.

“Ahh, those. So it’s another boom, huh. The same thing happened three years ago too.”

“Really?”

According to Crow, every few years the apprentice knights would fall into a secret technique boom. Each time, the new seniors would pass onto their new juniors the skills they inherited, as well as techniques they came up with on their own.

“T-, Then...”

If Crow knew about this, then it meant that Crow knew a secret technique as well.

Expectations suddenly surged within her.

“Yeah, I’ll teach you. My most valuable secret technique.”

Crow flashed a toothy smile, and nodded.

After that, at Crow’s instruction, Fii leant against a wall.

Crow stood in front of her.

(I wonder what it is! A way to escape a pinch with your back against the wall!? A way to corner an enemy against the wall!?) Fii’s heart pounded in excitement.

“Heath, this is a secret technique I came up with myself. I’ll only teach it to you.”

“Wah! Thank you very much!”

Fii knew now that she made the right choice in asking him.

He was definitely going to teach her something amazing.

“Alright. Here we go.”

“Yes!”

Crow's expression sudden became serious.

(He really is so different when he's using the sword.)

Suddenly, Fii became tense.

First, Crow placed his left arm beside her face.

(Is this to stop me from running...? Wasn't it going to be a sword technique...?)
She would have preferred something with the sword, but other techniques were fine too.

Or so she thought, when Crow brought his beautiful face close to her eyes.

(Eh-.... Eh-....?)

Fii didn't know what was going on any more. Crow had brought in his face point-blank now.

Just as she thought they were going to touch, his face went past hers, and in a low voice he whispered, "You're the only one I love."

"HYAAAAAAAAAH!"

A chill ran down her spine, and she screamed.

When he heard her, Crow covered his mouth with his hand and began to shake.

"Pfft... kkhkh... kh-"

He was laughing. He was stifling his laughter.

Fii finally understood. She was being teased! Crow-san was teasing her!

"PUHAH, AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH!"

In the end he couldn't contain it, and roared in laughter as he held his sides.

"Crow-san! You lied to me, didn't you! You promised that you would teach me a secret technique!"

Not only did Fii's face show anger, it was also as red as a tomato.

"Whoa, whoa, I told you the truth! That's my secret technique for getting girls to fall for me. You're really the only one I'll teach, you know."

"I don't want something like that! I don't need it!"

Seeing Crow laugh at her, Fii clenched a fist, and starting beating on him, fairly seriously.

But alas, Crow's well-built body showed no signs of damage at all.

"Haha, it worked, right? You screamed like a little girl just now! OW-, ow! He-, Hey! Don't go for the vitals! Stop it!"

Realising that her attacks weren't working, Fii began aiming for his vitals instead. She was targeting the gaps between the muscles, like Conrad had taught her.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry, okay!"

With where she was targeting, even Crow felt the pain, so he apologised. Her face still bright red, Fii wheezed as she stopped her fists.

"Geez! You're too much, Crow-san!"

"Nah, well, I'm sorry for teasing you, but like, the sword really is nothing but earnest practice. And I'd be troubled if you picked up some bad habits because of some weird technique, you know? So I think you'd better stop."

Even though he teased her, his warning still seemed serious.

"Then as long as it isn't the sword, it's okay?"

"Hmmmm, well, I guess? Maybe try asking the others."

So nodded Crow.

Fii decided to look for a secret technique outside of swordsmanship.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 38

The next person Fii visited was Conrad.

It was because Crow had told her that Conrad was the best in hand-to-hand.

Ever since that mission with Conrad, he would often be cross-dressed when Fii was around. And nobody even mentioned it.

Fii decided to stop caring.

“Conrad-san! Please teach me your skills.”

“Goodness. If you’re interested in make-up, shall I teach you a little?”

With an elbow on the table, and his head in his hand, Conrad was the spitting image of a beautiful and languid woman as he gave her a puzzled look.

But Fii shook her head at his reply.

“Not that. I want you to teach me your hand-to-hand combat skills.”

The technique he used to take down those men.

She was sure that she could surprise everybody if she learnt it.

“Hmmmm...”

After thinking for a little, he picked up an apple from the table with his other arm.

“You do this.”

“...?”

This time it was Fii’s turn to look confused.

“Like this.”

The moment Conrad smiled, the apple in his hand exploded.

Almost as though somebody had planted gunpowder within, the pieces of apple flew through the surroundings. When Conrad opened his left hand, the only

thing left was juice, and a little pulp left.

With the smile still on his face, he asked Fii,

“Wanna try?”

“It’s impossible.”

Fii shook her head.

妹

She went to ask Orbull too.

“Orbull-san, do you have a secret technique too?”

Orbull gave her paper with a smile.

『Not really.』

“Thought so~”

Fii returned the smile.

After that, the two of them took care of the plants together, before Fii went off to look for techniques again.

妹

This time she headed for Palwick.

As usual, he was training with his bow at the practice ground.

“Palwick-san, could you teach me anything about the bow?”

“So it’s you, Heath. I can teach you the basics.”

Palwick kept his eyes on the target, and easily hit the bulleye as he spoke to Fii. Some knight apprentices thought of him as scary and unapproachable, but Fii knew that he was surprisingly good at looking after others.

Fii told him the things that lead up to her being here.

When he heard it, he told her in his usual even tone,

“In that case, this is the same as the sword. There are no secret techniques. Simply daily training. If you pick up strange habits, your archery will be affected even worse than your swordsmanship.”

Fii felt that he had a point.
She had only just begun learning, but just messing up the stance a little bit would have her arrow completely off the mark.

(But...)

Palwick released another bulleyes, in the same place as before. Not even a millimetre apart.

(This is its own secret technique, isn't it.)

So thought Fii as she watched him.

妹

Fii visited Galluzzi as well.

He was in his own workshop in the castle. He could manage to create the simpler things in the meeting place, but most of his work required a fire and hearth, which was simply at odds with the wood storehouse. Thanks to that, most things were created here.

He created some things for other divisions as well.

"A secret technique, huhh. Well even if you ask me that, I basically don't fight, yanno...?" replied Galluzzi, as he stroked his stubbled chin.

"I see~..."

Even Fii wasn't sure about asking him, but the only members left were him and the Captain.

She wasn't sure she could meet with the busy Captain, and she was sure that he would reply the same way as Crow.

To begin with, both Crow and the Captain's sword techniques were basically secret techniques to her, but they were impossible for Fii to replicate.

"Aah, but I do have something like this."

Just when Fii had given up on secret techniques, Galluzzi pulled out a sword from the workshop.

"What is it!?"

Fii's eyes sparkled in excitement.

Galluzzi pointed tip of the sword towards a wooden plank, and then pressed his thumb down on the upper part of the handle.

-GACCHAN-

Together with what sounded like a spring erupting, the blade of the sword shot out from the handle, and pierced into the wooden plank.

“A-AMAZING-!” cheered Fii.

But soon, she calmed down a little.

“But I don’t think that’s quite what I was looking for.”

Remodelled weapons were probably against the rules.

“Haha, thought so,” he laughed. “Sorry I couldn’t help. But well, if you need anything come talk to me.”

“Yes. Thank you very much.”

With that, Fii parted with him.

She kind of wanted the sword.

妹

When she returned to the meeting place, she spotted a masked knight.

“Captain!”

Immediately waving a hand, she rushed over towards him.

“It’s you, Heath. You seem well as usual.”

“Yes, I’m very well!” she nodded with a smile.

Then, since she had nothing to lose, she decided to try asking him anyway.

“Captain, do you have any secret techniques? One that even I can do.”

“A secret technique?”

York didn’t seem to know what she was talking about, so Fii explained, and then he nodded.

“Fumu, so that’s how it is,” he said, after thinking for a little. “In that case, Kain should be right for the job. He should have techniques that will be useful to

you too. If you have the interest, then learn from him.”

‘Kain’

The moment she heard the name, Fii finally remembered that there was one more member of the 18th that she hadn’t met yet.

“I haven’t met Kain-san before. Will I be able to meet him?”

If the Captain was saying this, did that mean there was a place she could go to meet him?

Fii asked York about the mysterious member of their team.

“I see. So you haven’t met him yet. He should be up there,” he pointed.

Beyond his finger, was the top of a tree in the castle.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 39

Chapter 39 – Kain

‘Grass’ is a term for Edo period spies/ninjas. The term came about because they would often infiltrate enemy territory and stay there for two, three generations, spreading their roots like grass. Plus, nobody ever suspects the grass... (◡‿◡)

Kain was on the verge of an identity crisis.

He was a “Grass”, a special kind of soldier. Soldiers that were in charge of intelligence gathering under the King’s orders. Sometimes they would also involve themselves with assassinations, sabotage, or other types of unsavoury work. Although, ever since the reign of the new King, not once had they been ordered to do so.

Lately, Kain had been incessantly agonising over a certain matter.

(Should I tell him...? No, but, I am a Grass...)

As he watched his target from the top of a tree, he thought back to his earlier conversation with the King.

Having come to the King’s room without anybody seeing him, he reported the results of all the other Grass members, before hesitating over whether or not to report a certain issue.

“Your Majesty, about Princess Fii-”

“What. Was she ‘black’ after all?”

“No, she was not.”

“Then no need to report on her.”

“Yes...”

The King went back to his work and began writing again, completely cutting down Kain's chance to say anything. He hadn't realised at all that Kain's "No, she was not" was more strained than usual. It was also because Kain had trained to not let his emotions show, but...

Kain couldn't stand not telling him.

(That same Princess Fii is trying her best as one of your knight apprentices you know! And you're the one who hired her!)

that is.

But he couldn't... He had undertaken a mission.

『Observe Princess Fii. If she is 'black', report it. Otherwise, no need.』

For King Roy, 'no need' meant 'there is no need, so do not do it'.

The plan was to make the guards around her villa more and more lax.

Their missions were 『Stand guard so that Princess Fii does not leave through this exist』, 『No matter who visits, do not let them in』 and 『If she has any requests, give her only what she absolutely needs』.

As long as those guards didn't suddenly burn with some strange sense of duty for their equally strange orders, there would definitely be times when it was unguarded. That was the plan.

As for Kain, he had been told 『While this is happening, observe Princess Fii. If she is 'black', report it. Otherwise, no need.』

If she was 'black', then she would contact somebody related to that incident.

A few days after Kain began his mission, the first incident occurred. The cook left the villa. Considering the possibility of him being used as a messenger, Kain sent some other Grass to follow him, but he simply left the castle never to return. Right now, he was working as a cleaner in some run-down inn in the outskirts of the city.

The same day. Late at night, when he saw Princess Fii leaving the villa walls, 'Could it be?' he thought, but in the end she just strolled here and there, before stepping on a paper of some kind. After holding it out under the moonlight, she circled about happily, and then immediately headed back to her villa.

No matter how you slice it, she didn't seem suspicious. Well, perhaps suspicious in another way, however.

Later on he checked it, just to make sure it wasn't some message, but it was just an announcement about the apprentice knight exams.

And then on the next day, Princess Fii's survival lifestyle began.

Princess Fii never spoke to the guards. Far from it, she tried to avoid them. As she did, in a villa where it was impossible to support herself, she subsisted on the food——essentially just leftovers——that the cook left behind.

When he saw it, huge droplets of sweat began to run down Kain's forehead.

(Why did things turn out like this...? Should I report to His Majesty? No, but the orders were to not to report to him unless she was 'black'... Then, should I bring food... No, I can't. My orders were to only observe. Those guards are the ones who are supposed to be looking after her...!)

His faint hopes were dashed when the guards showed no signs of noticing what was happening inside.

Even though the cook had often come and gone from the villa, the guards didn't notice at all that he had stopped.

Kain remembered the people His Majesty wanted for the role.
'People who have low work ethic and are too stupid to question a guard cycle with holes in it.'

And His Majesty had found people fantastic for the job.
These men showed no signs of suspicion at all, and simply stood there until their shift was up, enjoying a happy and lazy lifestyle.

(If it comes down to it, then... But, that's my very final resort...)

There was a nutritional ration in his pocket.

But to give her this was tantamount to denying his existence as a Grass.

(It's fine... If I just sneak it into her pocket, then it's still okay. I won't have defied any orders...!)

Kain continued to tell himself this in his mind.

As for Princess Fii, her survival lifestyle continued. While making sure the

guards didn't see her, she started to practice sword swings.

(Exercise is bad for you when you're fasting, you know...! And you hardly have any muscle on you...!)

His stomach had begun to hurt.

Finally, the villa had run out of food...

Princess Fii continued to train on her empty stomach, and when she wasn't, she would sit still to conserve energy.

(What do I do... What should I do...)

His head was spinning with his master's orders and Princess Fii's condition. If he could just leave these rations somewhere she would notice... No, he could even just go buy her normal food. Just that would be enough to save her. But disobeying orders for personal feelings would disqualify him as a Grass.

A Grass, was a special kind of soldier.

They were simple soldiers, without pedigree or position, but the information they dealt with were national secrets, or sometimes even beyond that. They were the people who were closest to the King, and needed to work even in such a private environment. There were many times when they knew things that would cause a national scandal.

Because of that, their mindsets had to be different from other retainers.

Any other retainer would advise their King if he erred, and doing so was good. But the Grass could not.

Questioning the King's judgement could inevitably plant seeds of rebellion, and such things had already happened many times in history.

And for a Grass to rebel was more dangerous than any other retainer.

Given the natures of their job, it wouldn't even be difficult to directly assassinate the King, and the danger they posed was immeasurable.

Because of that, Grass were raised to become as faithful to their orders as possible. Making their own decisions was only to be done without the scope of the orders.

If berating and guiding their lord's foolish actions was the role of the retainers, then to blindly exact their master's orders was the role of the Grass.

(I am a Grass... I am a Grass... I am a Grass...)

Kain continued to persuade himself in his head.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 40

Chapter 40

In the end, Kain could only watch, and eventually Princess Fii left the villa.

She took the exam, fought desperately, splendidly passed, and began working happily as an apprentice knight. And of course, the person that hired her was none other than His Majesty.

And His Majesty had no idea.

To begin with, it all came down to His Majesty's bad habit. The things he had an interest in, and the things he felt were important, he would handle by himself as much as possible. Thanks to that, he was always looking for ways to save time.

So much that it became dubious as to whether there was even a point in shaving time away in some of those areas any more.

And as for everything he deemed less important, he bundled them together and had them dealt together without his involvement. And the reports on them would usually be kept to the bare minimum as well. Given that his choice in personnel was perfect as well, and that his arrangements for everything were well considered, this system usually worked well. But this time, it could only be said to have failed.

And the fundamental cause, Kain thought, was that he had completely misread Princess Fii's personality.

Had Princess Fii been your average, wilful princess, then she would have immediately complained to the guards, and at least have managed to secure her minimum living needs. There would not have been a problem. Well, at least "not a problem" by His Majesty's values...

Furthermore, even a princess with a normal personality would have reached her

limit after a few days, and made a complaint or two.

But Fii was the polar opposite.

She would never say a word of complaint, make do somehow with what she was given, and if she had any problems, she would always try to solve it herself.

Even when he looked at things objectively, the results of his observations forced him to conclude that she was a good, courageous girl, who tried her very best.

And also a very dynamic girl, at that.

The result was that she snuck out of the villa to improve her living circumstances, splendidly passed the apprentice knight exam, and then started living her life in the apprentice knight dorms.

And the only one who had seen His Majesty's plan go to nothing, and the only one who held the most important information of all, was of all people, a Grass like himself...

It was strange coming from somebody like himself, but Kain felt that a Grass was a very inflexible soldier, who could only follow terrible orders, to a terrible end.

And even after this massive failure, far from taking steps to fix things, His Majesty hadn't even the slightest idea. Thanks to that, Princess Fii was left to her devices, as she spent her days working hard, and improving as a knight through her failures. As for Kain, he simply continued to observe her.

Although it was too late to be feeling so now, Kain regretted not saying anything.

The King had said that Kain had said more than enough about this though.

(The only thing 'enough' about this is my observation! What are you doing about her needs! Aren't there still matters like fashion, and socialising to consider? Should she be allowed things like this too? She's a girl, you know!?)

But unfortunately, Kain only realised how flawed everything was after observing her for a while, so he wasn't in any position to be criticising others...

That this King was perfect save for his treatment of women, was something that all of his associates knew as common sense, Grass and retainers alike.

Kain knew as well.

He knew that His Majesty had asked for absolutely no reports about this, not

even from the guards outside her villa.

That was how little interest he held in Princess Fii.

Even if she turned out to be 'black', His Majesty never saw her as a threat. The whole mission was less about determining this, and more about finding her contacts if she actually did turn out to be 'black'.

His Majesty was presently glaring at a report on water control for the rivers in the south. Kain doubted he even remembered the name 'Princess Fii'.

A female Grass member, Néna, had occasionally taken observation shifts as well, and was in fact the only female on the team. When she looked at His Majesty these days, her gaze had grown 10°C frostier, but he probably hadn't noticed this either.

Kain once again concluded that he had to do something himself.

(It's simple... 'Princess Fii is working as your division's apprentice knight.'
That's all I have to say...)

Thinking this, he was about to speak to His Majesty who had just picked up his pen.

But that instant-

『If she is 'black', report it.』

『Otherwise, no need.』

『The role of a Grass is to follow his orders to the best of his ability.』

『Advising the lord is the role of the retainers. To become his arms and legs is our job.』

various words, flashed through his mind.

(Why...? Why can't I say something so simple? Why...?)

That day...

(Why am I a Grass...!)

It was the first time in his life, that he questioned who he was.

Of course, the reason he was a Grass was because he had been born to Grass parents, and because he was raised from childhood to become a Grass, but that

wasn't the kind of question he was asking here.

Not realising Kain's troubles, His Majesty Roy began writing as usual. Apparently he had decided on the direction he would be taking this year, in regards to water control projects.

(If only he had even a hundredth of this interest in Princess Fii...) Kain couldn't help but think.

In the end, his role as a Grass won over, and he couldn't say a thing about Princess Fii.

(I am a Grass... One who accomplishes his missions, and nothing else. I am a Grass... I am a Grass...)

As he repeated this hundreds of times in his mind, he left the King's study without anybody noticing.

To be honest, it was actually a bit too late to be thinking about these things, but Kain couldn't let himself think too deeply about it.

That happened yesterday night.

Today, Kain had been observing Princess Fii from a treetop as well. Just a moment ago, she had been speaking happily to His Majesty Roy.

(Oh crap, oh crap! I spaced out!)

He had been deep in his thoughts, but now realised he hadn't been observing properly. Looking back towards her in a fluster, he found that neither Princess Fii nor His Highness Roy could be seen.

(Mu. Have she already moved? I need to find her.)

It was a terrible failure for a Grass. By now, he really questioned his qualifications.

Even so, he tried his best to remain faithful to his mission, but before he could make his move, he noticed somebody trying to climb up the tree he was hiding in.

And they had gotten extremely close...!

Not even a second after he noticed, a young girl's face popped out from between the tree branches.

An adorable girl's face, framed by a boyish short cut.

In other words, Princess Fii's face.

After she climbed up here, and found his hidden form, she beamed with an amiable smile, and greeted him.

“Could it be that you're Kain-san!? I'm called Heath! Hello!”

(I MADE CONTACT WITH THE OBSERVATION TARGET! WHAT DO I DO, YOUR MAJESTYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY!!?!)

Kain screamed in his heart.

“Captain York told me where you were, but when I looked, you weren't there! I tried all the other hiding spots, but it looks like I've finally found you!”

(AND YOU EVEN TOLD THE TARGET ALL THE HIDING SPOTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTS!?!?!?)

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 41

Fii's first friend from Déman appears in the next chapter.

"Kain-san! The Captain told me to ask you for techniques, so here I am!"

As Princess Fii said, York had sent her over here to learn.

What's more, she even had a formal directive, signed with York's name. To a Grass like him, it was the same as a direct order from His Majesty.

At any rate, it was dangerous for her up here, so he had her climb down before talking.

"You're amazing! To think that you were hiding up in a place like that. I had no idea! What were you doing?"

(I was observing you...)

"..."

But of course he couldn't tell her that.

Seeing him stay silent, Princess Fii seemed to guess something.

"Ah-, I'm sorry. It must have been some secret mission, huh!" she exclaimed, eyes sparkling for some reason.

"Yes..."

In fact, it really was a secret mission.

Though it was probably not as cool as she was imagining.

"So Kain-san, what kind of technique will you be teaching me?"

Apparently Princess Fii had completely decided that she would be teaching her. He could see the sparkles of expectations in her eyes.

(No... Is this really fine...?)

Kain once again went through his lord's orders in his mind.

『Observe Princess Fii.』

『If she is ‘black’, report it.』

『Teach Heath(Princess Fii) your techniques.』

Mn, there didn’t seem to be any contradictions.

In fact, observing Princess Fii as he taught her techniques, and reporting nothing to His Majesty was in fact quite easy.

There didn’t seem to be any contradictions...

No contradictions...

(This is weird, right...! From a common sense point of view...!)

Kain wanted to clutch his head and scream. Or rather, he was already clutching his head.

He had stayed true to the role of a Grass, he had stayed true to obeying his orders, and the result was that the situation had grown even more confusing than before.

“Kain-san! Kain-san!? Are you okay!?”

Princess Fii looked at him, worriedly.

Resolving himself, Kain stood right up.

“Yes, I am fine. I apologise for worrying you.”

(I am a Grass... One who accomplishes his missions, and nothing else...)

He asserted that he was a Grass in his mind, but he was actually feeling desperate.

“I see. Thank goodness. I don’t have anyone left to ask but you. So, what is it that you will be teaching me?”

(I can teach her techniques, but wont that be dangerous...? This lady is a princess, no, you could say that she is already a queen. It begs to reason that I can’t teach her anything dangerous... Then, I absolutely can’t teach her offensive skills. Practising movement skills might injure her too... In that case...)

“Then, break fallin——”

“Something flashier would be good.”

Just as he was about to suggest something safe, Princess Fii puffed up her cheeks.

(Oh? She’s surprisingly wilful...?)

His impression of her during his observations, had painted somebody a little different from the girl he was speaking to now, and that gap made him a little bewildered.

“Then, a defensive technique to avoid being grab—”

“I’ve already learnt that at apprentice school.”

After that, Kain continued listing safe things that he could teach even to Her Highness the Second Queen, but every single one was met with rejection.

“I want something flashier please. If I can’t show off to anybody, there’s no point. I BELIEVE IN YOU, KAIN-SAN!” she declared, even though it should have been their first meeting.

Fii was also desperate. Kain-san was her final hope for a secret technique. And from Fii’s eyes, Kain-san was emitting the aura of somebody who was just filled with secret techniques.

(This is bad... I don’t have any safe techniques left... Can’t be helped... At least a movement skill then...)

In the end, Kain decided to compromise...

Kain brought Princess Fii into a rear garden. As a Grass, he fundamentally avoided places where many people would see him.

“This kind of feels like a secret training session, doesn’t it.”

Princess Fii looked at him with excited eyes.

This rear garden had a wall. It was one of the shortest walls in the castle.

Kain produced a thick rope from his pocket with a claw at the end. Holding the claw in his right hand, he tossed it strongly up onto the wall.

Catching onto the wall, the claw fixed the rope in place. After that, Kain smoothly climbed the rope without a sound, and a few seconds later he was on

top of the wall.

(H-, How's this...?)

Looking back at Princess Fii to check, he found her looking up at him, and in her eyes were more sparkles than ever.

“A-, Amazing...!”

Apparently he had met her expectations. Sighing in relief, he descended the wall to land in front of her.

After that, it was her turn to practice.

“Ei-! Huh...? Ei-...!”

Although Princess Fii threw it many times, the claw couldn't quite hook the top.

“This is pretty hard, huh...”

In fact, Kain had been aiming for this. There were a lot of difficult things with this technique, but none so difficult as getting the hook to latch to the wall to begin with.

The technique could be said to be very dangerous as a whole, but there was no danger as long as she never began climbing.

Princess Fii continued to challenge the wall for another 20 minutes, before finally handing the hook back to Kain.

(Phew...)

He was sure that she had given up.

(Thank goodness... With this, my mission is over...)

For a moment, Kain thought this.

But.

“Please throw it up for me. I want to try the climbing practice, too. I can practice the throwing by myself later.”

(How efficient... Or rather, why didn't I think of this myself...?)

Kain held his head in worry again...

Princess Fii hadn't said anything wrong. Thanks to that, Kain could only accept. The hook caught the top of the wall. He threw it more carefully than usual.

Immediately, Princess Fii grabbed the rope, and then began practising her climbing.

In a panic, Kain rushed over underneath her, and prepared himself to catch her.

The first time she climbed, Princess Fii suffered a huge stumble. Kain thought his heart was going to stop.

But she recovered surprisingly quickly, and because climbing up the wall again.

(Oh my god...)

Normally, this wasn't something you could do in one go, even if somebody ordered you to.

There was the issue of balancing yourself as you climbed. Inexperience with supporting your weight. Not to mention the fear of heights. All of them would come together to interfere, and the first try would always end in failure.

But for Princess Fii, despite a number of stumbles, she steadily made her way up the wall.

Not only that, but the further up she went, the more stably she climbed.

A light body, an excellent natural athleticism, and finally, an unflinching bravery.

In Kain's opinion, despite her unfamiliarity with it, these qualities of hers had led her to her success.

(We'd love to have her in Grass... Wait, what are you thinking. She's the Second Queen of this country, you know...)

Kain denied the thought that came naturally to mind.

In the end, Fii splendidly reached the top on her first try.

"Kain-san, I did ittt!"

Princess Fii waved at him from on top of the wall. And as she made merry up there, she lost her balance.

"Uwawah, oh?"

She fell from the wall before his eyes.

(UOOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!)

Kain forgot himself, and charged over to catch the Princess.

And then, he scolded her in as loud a voice as his Grass status would allow him.

“Right after you succeed is when you need to be most careful! Please stay focused until you reach the ground!”

“Sorry.”

Perhaps because she knew she was in the wrong, Princess Fii obediently nodded as she lay curled up in his arms like a cat.

“Then I’ll try not to fail this time. Ah, and please teach me how to get down too.”

Showing no fear from falling once, Princess Fii immediately began to practice again.

Like that, she ended up spending the whole day on climbing up and down.

“Thank you for teaching me such an amazing technique, Kain-san!”

After the training, her expression was completely satisfied.

Then, for some reason she bite her thumb and stared ennnnviously at Kain’s chest.

It was the same place he had stored the hook-rope.

(It can’t be that she wants it...? No, you can’t. I only have one of these. It’s essential to a Grass... I can’t part from this...)

After thinking for a short moment,

“Please ask Galluzzi... I’m sure he can create a new one...”

“Yes!”

Hearing his words, Princess Fii nodded with an extremely happy smile.

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A few days later, Fii appeared before her apprentice friends with a smug smile.

“I’ve finally learnt a secret technique too!”

She had practised her grappling hook for the last few days, and could finally use the skill properly.

The first people she wanted to show were Slad, Gheith, and Remié.

Incidentally, when Gorms heard about the secret technique, he had immediately made his escape. Fii had already decided that she was definitely going to show him later.

At any rate, first she was going to show off to these three.

“Ohh? What kinda technique?”

“I thought we had already run out of new techniques over these last few days, but...”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

Slad was simply interested, Gheith seemed to be thinking deeply about it, and Remié gave Fii a smile.

And then, the moment she brought out her grappling hook, their three expressions turned complex.

“Heath, you...”

“That’s...”

“That’s against regulations, you know...”

All three of them were astounded, and looked at her with pity. Apparently that secret technique boom had at some point gained rules.

Supposedly...

Sword techniques gained 1.5x the points, bow and spear techniques would gain 1x the points, and everything else was against the rules.

The length of the demonstration could not exceed 10 seconds.

If they moved further than two metres from their starting position, they would be disqualified.

If it was a sword technique, you could only use three of them.

Because the techniques being shown off grew wider and wider in scope, the boys imposed rules on themselves.

Since Fii had been training with a grappling hook these last few days, she had

absolutely no idea.

When Remié explained the rules to Fii, her face turned deathly white. The secret technique that Kain taught her had no use whatsoever.

“W-, Well, try your best next time? Okay?”

[illegible]

Remié's awkward encouragement was to no avail, and Fii's mournful cry resounded through the school.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 42

Chapter 42 – A Lynette Attack!

The next 10-ish chapters are all really good, so my apologies to people waiting on Reika, Tilea and Milfiria.

During one of her days off, Fii had been taking a stroll in the castle when she suddenly heard the sound of an argument.

It was coming from the direction of her villa.

“Why will you not let me see Fii-sama!”

“Because His Majesty, the King, ordered us not to...”

“Why did he order such a thing!!”

“If you do not ask him that yourself, I cannot really...”

Realising that she knew this voice, Fii hid in the shade of a tree. When she took a peek, she found a maid girl with a bob cut furiously glaring at the guard to Fii's villa.

(Ly-... Lynette...!?)

Fii almost jumped up in surprise.

Lynette was a maid who had served Fiiru for a long time, and she was also Fii's friend.

She should have been busy serving Fiiru after she had become a Queen. So then why was Lynette arguing with the guard to the villa Fii was supposed to be living in?

Or rather, it was only Lynette who was doing any arguing; the guard was simply flinching at her.

“A-, Anyway, I'm sorry but we cannot let you pass, so...”

(This is bad... This is so baddd...)

Fii had to cover her mouth from the shock.

If Lynette entered the villa, they would realise that Fii had escaped.

She had spent so much time gaining her current lifestyle too...

This was bad... This was very bad...

As she watched the proceedings in fear, Lynette finally sighed as though she had given up.

“I understand...”

(Thank goodness...)

Both Fii and the guard were visibly relieved.

But in the next moment, Lynette glared at the guard again and declared,

“Tomorrow I will ask for His Majesty’s permission and return here! The next time I come here, I’ll have you get out of the way!”

With that, Lynette turned around and headed towards the palace with quick steps.

In the shade of the tree, Fii squatted and hugged her legs.

(She’s coming to the villa tomorrow!? What do I do. I’m going to be beaten if she finds out! Depending on the circumstances, they might even kick me out of the apprentice knights! I have to fool her somehow!)

Fii trembled at the thought of Lynette’s sudden visit.

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The next day, Fii was in bed.

“Are you okay? Do you have a fever?”

“I might be a little sick... But I’m okay.”

Fii coughed away as Remié worriedly checked her face.

Next to her bed were a number of towels and a tub of water.

(I’m sorry for malingering...)

As she tried to look as red and sick as possible, Fii apologised to the worried Remié in her heart.

“I’ll tell the instructor, so get a good rest, okay? I’m heading off to training now.”

“Mn. Thanks, Remié.”

She apologised again in her heart, to Remié who had brought her cold medicine and a towel, as she watched him walk away.

Then, when she sensed that nobody was left in the dorm, she sprung out of bed.

“I have to hurry-! Before Lynette gets there!”

The dorm was a two story building.

Fixing the hook of her hook-rope to the window, she leapt out of the window as she held onto the rope. After maintaining her descent speed, she curbed the final impact with a break fall.

After that, she moved from the shade of tree to tree, making her way towards the villa unnoticed. It was a movement skill that Kain had taught her, but to be honest, it was a little much to be doing this on castle grounds...

The chance of her being discovered was low because she was keeping watch for people just like Kain taught her, but considering that she was an apprentice knight, being discovered moving about like this would be a lot more suspicious than had she walked out in the open...

As she soundlessly made her way from empty space to empty space, she got closer and closer to the villa.

The guards were already in front of the door. It meant that Fii couldn’t enter through the front, but she had already accounted for this in her plan.

These lazy guards would only guard the front.

Fii suppressed her presence and moved around the back, before tossing her grappling hook onto the roof. And then she climbed right to the top.

It had made a few sounds, but the guards showed no signs of noticing.

(They suure are lazy...)

Even Fii was shocked by their work ethic as she watched the carefree guards from above the wall.

Finally, using the same skills that she used at the dorm, she quietly landed

inside the walls of the villa grounds, and successfully infiltrated the villa.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 43

After entering the villa building, Fii pulled out the dress in her room, and put it on in a fluster.

But Lynette didn't come for a while, and it was only after two hours did Fii hear somebody enter the building.

"Fii-sama, are you here? It's Lynette."

Lynette's voice resounded through the villa.

"You've come, Lynette. It's been a while."

Fii left her room, and welcomed Lynette with an innocent expression.

"Fii-sama!"

The moment she saw Fii's face, Lynette ran over with teary eyes. Then, she noticed the rest of Fii, causing her eyes to widen.

"Fii-sama... Your hair..."

"Aah, yeah. It was getting annoying, so I cut it. Ahaha."

Having her hair pointed out so quickly, Fii's heart began to pound a little.

(She hasn't suspected anything, right...?)

Fii didn't plan on keeping it from Lynette forever. She had been close to Lynette in Déman, and felt that she needed to tell her one day.

But not right now.

If Lynette knew what she was doing, she would be opposed. Because it's dangerous, she would say.

Thus far, Fii had only failed again and again, and couldn't proudly say that she was a splendid knight. She wanted to tell Lynette after she was confident that

she had grown. She had confidence that she could persuade Lynette if she did that.

And also, Lynette was supposed to be busy with Fiiru, now that she had become Queen.

Fii wouldn't allow her to burden herself with more worries.

Lynette simply staaaared at Fii with a frown.

(Is... Is she suspicious of me...?)

Fii could feel the sweat at her brow.

After watching her for a while, Lynette's frown deepened, and she began asking Fii about her lifestyle.

"Have you felt any unhappiness living here, or have they mistreated you in any way...?"

"Not at all. Each day is super-! ...is kind of fun, in its own way!" persuaded Fii with clenched fists.

She very nearly brought more suspicion on herself by exclaiming that each day was 'super fun!'.

The fact was that Fii was immensely satisfied with her life in Orstoll. Her life as a knight, that is.

She had met somebody who needed her, and she loved everybody in the 18th.

She had made friends, and was having fun in the dorms with them. All the

lessons and new experiences gave her a sense of fulfilment as well.

Fii even felt glad that she had come to this country.

"Truly...? If there is anything that you're unhappy with, I will complain to His Majesty Roy and———"

"It's fine! I'm really fine!"

Lynette once again sent Fii into a panic.

If Lynette really did that, then she might lose the lifestyle she had worked so hard for.

And also, Lynette was supposed to be working as Fiiru's maid, so it would be horrible if she fell into the bad graces of Fiiru's husband.

“Everything’s fine for me, so don’t worry!” [boku]

“‘Boku’?”

(UHYAI-!)

She almost jumped from her slip-up.

“Ehehe, I mean, things are fine for me.” [watashi]

Fii corrected herself, as she prayed that Lynette wouldn’t grow suspicious. Lynette looked at her a little doubtfully, before approaching her to stroke her face, and look deeply at her.

“It looks... like you’ve been eating well, at least.”

Of course. She even got seconds at the dining hall.

“And your complexion... is also good.”

Yep, because she was training hard each day.

When Lynette moved on from Fii’s face to her clothing, she frowned again.

“Your dress is wrinkled, you know. Don’t I always tell you that you shouldn’t rush to change?” she said, as she straightened Fii’s clothing.

Fii couldn’t help but giggle.

“It’s kinda nostalgic. You always did warn me, back in Déman.”

Hearing this, Lynette puffed her cheeks a little.

“If you say it like that, doesn’t it sound like I’m always nagging you?”

“Sorry, sorry.”

Fii knew that Lynette only cautioned her like this because she was always caring for her.

And she also knew that Lynette worried about seeming like a nag.

“I’m grateful to you, you know? Not very people would even bother with me.”

The maids looked after her minimum needs—truly just the bare minimum—but they never bothered telling her anything. How to put on her dress properly, or table manners... thinking about it, perhaps it was Lynette who had taught her all of this.

“Thanks for everything,” she replied with another smile.

Lynette’s face dyed red.

“It... It isn’t anything to be so thankful for. I-I’m going to go make some tea, all right? There isn’t much time.”

“If you’re busy, then don’t push yourself, okay?”

“I’m not pushing myself at all!”

Perhaps to hide her embarrassment, Lynette sped off towards the kitchen.

Relieved that she somehow managed to fool her, Fii looked forward to the first tea brewed by Lynette in quite a while.

In the past, she would often brew tea when Fii was with Fiiru, or when she had free time from her maid duties.

The fact that she was able to serve the royal family was testament to Lynette’s variety of skills, but her tea brewing was outstanding even amongst those.

After the tea was done, the two of them drank it together.

Lynette tried to decline the seat opposite her, but Fii said that it was lonely, and got her to sit down.

“Maids really aren’t allowed to do this kind of thing, you know,” Lynette said, but in the end she obliged.

As Fii had expected, Lynette’s tea was especially delicious.

“Has Fiiru been well?”

Since Lynette was here, Fii decided to ask about her sister too.

“Y-Yes. She wanted to come meet you too, you know!”

“I see... But she’s probably busy, which is why she can’t come, right?”

“Yes...”

Lynette’s expression sank.

Fii was sure that the Queen of a huge country like Orstoll had plenty of important duties.

Fiiru would probably be completely busy for the first year, at least.

Actually, considering how closely she served Fiiru, Fii was shocked that Lynette could even be here.

Not only that, but Fii had the feeling that Lynette's expression clouded over after her question.

"Did something happen? If you've been having any problems, why not talk to me about it? I probably won't be able to help much, but I'll listen, okay?"

But Lynette shook her head.

"No, things are fine on our end. I should be telling you to speak to me about any problems you might have, instead."

Again, Lynette was worrying about Fii.

(She's such a good girl.)

Lynette had always worried about Fii like this, since their days in Déman.

Because of that, to begin with, Fii had never intended to tell the two how she had lived in this villa.

Things were fine now that she was a knight apprentice, but to those two, just the thought that she might have continued living like that was...

Fiiru and the King of this nation were lovers, and Lynette was Fiiru's closest maid. Fii wouldn't allow herself to get in the way of things, even a little.

Plus, things were better now.

One day she would become a fine knight, and once things calmed down on Fiiru and Lynette's ends as well, at that time she would tell the two of them how she was living now.

Time passed as they enjoyed their peaceful teatime. Apparently she really was quite busy, because as soon as they finished their tea, Lynette began preparing to leave.

"I really wish I could stay longer, but..."

"It's fine. Don't worry about me, and just go help Fiiru."

"Yes..."

Lynette nodded.

“When I have time, I will come again, Fii-sama.”

Again, Fii’s brow was wet with sweat.

(I-, If possible, I’d really prefer to know about your visits in advance...) She definitely didn’t hate being with Lynette, and she was happy that Lynette was worried about her.

But speaking realistically, it was a real problem for her to deal with Lynette’s visits, now that she was an apprentice knight.

“In that case, on days before you visit, could you maybe hang a scarf on a castle balcony that you can see from here?”

“As scarf? Why on earth would...”

Even Fii felt that Lynette’s doubts couldn’t be helped.

“Just knowing that you’re going to visit makes me excited, and if I know a whole day earlier, won’t I get to enjoy the excitement for longer?”

“.....I understand.”

For a moment Fii thought that she had failed, but after a long moment of Silence, Lynette nodded in agreement.

(Thank goodness. Looks like I somehow managed to trick her.) Now that she had a method of infiltrating this place, Fii could just pretend that she was living here on days that Lynette was coming. Since Lynette seemed to be quite busy, Fii doubted it would be often.

She was confident that she could make do as long as she feigned illness like today.

“Well then, Fii-sama. I will definitely come again, all right?”

“Mn. See you, Lynette!”

As Lynette left, glancing backwards regretfully, Fii waved her hand. After she said goodbye to Fii, Lynette left for the door with a fast pace.

Fii was sure that she had pushed herself just to come here today. While feeling thankful that Lynette had visited despite her own circumstances, she breathed a sigh of relief at somehow making it through this first visit.

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After leaving the villa, Lynette quickly headed to Fiiru-sama.
But even while her body moved, her mind was filled with Fii-sama.

(She was pretending to be happy, but that promise about the scarf... I knew that she was lonely...!) She seemed to be eating well enough, but there were no servants in sight, and the villa was worn down and spartan. Even the room had been dusty, and the guards were all unmotivated. They were unmistakably mistreating Fii-sama.

But despite that, Fii-sama was worried about her instead, and put up a show of being happy for her.

(If at least... If at least that lot were serving Fii-sama, then at least Fii-sama would have a little support, but they...!) Lynette's nails dug into her palms as she gritted her teeth, as she thought back to those maids who had outright refused to serve Fii-sama.

Even though they were free today, they hated the very notion of serving Fii-sama, and instead just wasted time in the palace, pretending to be busy.

(No... I can't leave Fii-sama to that lot to begin with... They're maids from Orstoll, and all badmouth Fii-sama without knowing a thing... If only I were there, Fii-sama wouldn't have to feel this way... If only I could serve Fii-sama instead...) Lynette stopped her feet for a moment, and then hung her head in self-ridicule.

(But I suppose to Fii-sama, I'm the same as those other maids... In the end, I left her too...) In the end, Lynette had chosen to stay with Fiiru-sama as well.

Lynette thought back to the face of the man who was this nation's King. The rumours that he was cold to his Second Queen had spread through the nation. Lynette felt this was natural.

(I'm grateful to that man for sheltering Fiiru-sama... But I can't accept his treatment of Fii-sama.) That King had misunderstood Fii-sama. He hadn't even met her once, and didn't even intend to. Nobody in this country knew the real Fii-sama.

But Lynette soon shook her head to deny her thoughts.

(No. I can't accept his treatment of Fii-sama, but I should be thankful enough that he's helping with Fiiru-sama's problem. It would be unreasonable to want anything more from him.

I can't rely on that King.

I need to do something myself. If I let everybody know what Fii-sama is really like, everybody will realise how wonderful she is.

But right now I don't have the time to move freely...

I have to... I have to find the time, and then let the people of this country understand her appeal. And once they know, there's no way they'll treat her in this way.) As determination burned in her heart, Lynette left the walls of Fii-sama's villa.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 44

Chapter 44 – Side Story – Lynette and Fii

This is a story of when Lynette was only a child, and was not yet serving Fii.

“Why is such a little girl wearing a maid outfit?”

“She’s from, you know, that ‘famous maid family’.”

“Ohh, that one~”

Some maids whispered to each other as they watched Lynette who was ten years their junior, walking about the Déman royal palace.

“Don’t you think it’s unfair? Just because they’re the same age, they made her Fiiru-sama’s personal maid right away.”

“I’m worried that such a small child can even manage. Really, it should be adults like us doing that job.”

Lynette could clearly hear their words.

(Hmph. You can’t even follow the steps to making tea. What adults.)

Because she had been raised since infancy in the ways of a maid, the carelessness of Déman’s maids was intolerable to her.

They cut corners and made mistakes in all their jobs, from cleaning to clothing. Making tea was another such example. Because they cut down on the time used to steep the tea, or the time to warm the cup, the result was a cooler tea that lacked fragrance. It was just a waste of the tea leaves.

But despite that, neither His Majesty the King, or Her Highness the Queen, seemed to notice. Because of that, the maids only grew worse and worse.

When Lynette had first come here, she was shocked.

All the jobs in the palace were done carelessly. Sometimes a few maids would be

relatively diligent, but even they would always have a sour expression. None of them had any drive...

All of her c-oworkers were older than her, but not one of them was worthy of respect.

The only blessing in all of this was being able to serve Fiiru-sama. Perhaps it was a rude way of putting things, but both the King and Queen were ignorant. Even the tea that she steeped with all her heart was simply emptied like any other.

And the reason that she served Fiiru-sama wasn't because of her skill or character, but simply because she was a girl from the 'famous maid family' and they decided that she was suitable as a result.

Only Fiiru-sama had smiled and told her "It was the first time I've ever had such delicious tea."

Although Fiiru-sama was the same age as Lynette, she possessed the clarity and wisdom to see the real worth of things. Truly the ideal master. Lynette was very thankful that she could serve somebody like that.

Lynette headed to the well, as she was lost in her thoughts. Besides their master's needs, a maid needed to take care of herself as well. But because she was Fiiru-sama's personal maid, she didn't have time to wash her own clothing. Because of that, Lynette could only leave her laundry to other maids, and would come here to collect it after they were done.

When she arrived there, she found her clothing strewn about carelessly.

(There's no tie...)

Lynette immediately noticed. It was intentional harrassment. All the maids in the nation wanted to serve Fiiru-sama. Because of that, everybody was prejudiced against Lynette for gaining her place at her age. And her tie was something specially made to signify her position as the Princess' personal attendant. Although she still had spares, they were not things she could lose.

(I doubt they had the courage to dispose of them, so it should be hidden

somewhere difficult to find.)

Having already known the type of people they were, Lynette began to search for it.

But she was not so calm on the inside.

(Argh! I don't have time!)

Personal maids had very little time for themselves.
Tarrying here would inconvenience Fiiru-sama as well.

"This is why they're third rates," she spat despite herself.

At that moment, Lynette felt somebody tap on her shoulder.

"Is this what you were looking for?"

A hand was holding her tie.

"T-, Thank you very much."

After accepting the tie, she realised that the hand belonged to a girl her age. When she raised her head, staring back at her was a girl with the same golden hair as Déman's royal family.

Lynette knew this girl. She was Déman's other princess. Fii.
Fiiru-sama's older twin.

Before Lynette had come to this palace, her mother had shown her a portrait just in case.

For some reason, a very rough, and casually painted portrait.

Now that she was looking at the real thing, she felt that it didn't resemble her.

Rather than the portrait, it was more the fact that this palace only had one other girl her age, that Lynette recognised this girl.

Lynette also knew about this other princess.
But she had never ever seen her.

Not even when the royal couple were having tea with Fiiru-sama. Not even at their family dinners. Not even in the parties that they brought her sister to.

Instead, here, by this dark and abandoned well, was Lynette's first meeting with that other princess.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 45

Though impolite, Lynette's first impression of Fii was 'un-princess-like'.

She was wearing a dress, but it was clearly an unfashionable one.

It was common sense for a Princess to wear a dress made in accordance to the latest trends.

From the King, and the Queen, as well as the nobles and royalty of the neighbouring countries, Fiiru-sama received dozens of dresses.

But the princess in front of her was wearing a dress, with wear and tear here and there. Perhaps it had been worn by somebody else in their childhood.

Even the way it was treated was bad. Normally, the clothing of royalty was carefully washed. Even the laziest maids would take care.

But the dress that this princess was wearing seemed to have been washed together with maids' clothings. That was how bad it looked.

Not only that, but the way she wore the clothing couldn't ever be called graceful.

If Fiiru-sama wore the same dress as other nobles, she would wear it so gracefully that it would seem to be a completely different dress, but this girl was...

Since Lynette seemed to be staring at her, Fii tilted her head in wonder. Lynette's hands seemed to move by themselves to fix the wrinkles in Fii's dress sleeves.

"Please wear your dress properly. You are a princess too, after all."

This other princess simply stared blankly, before bursting into laughter.

"Thanks. I'll take care."

Good advice could sometimes upset others, but in the end it was for their sake. This was something Lynette understood, even as a child.

Although Fiiru-sama needed no warnings to begin with, she was the type to heed it with a smile. On the other hand, the King and Queen would visibly frown if it ever happened to them. It would fall to Fiiru-sama to mediate.

People like Fiiru-sama were rare. Because of that, Lynette had been sure that this other princess would surely have been offended too. She didn't even know when she had gained this impression.

When contrary to expectations, Fii actually thanked her with a smile, her cheeks burnt with shame at her misunderstanding.

"As long as you understand. Please excuse me."

In the end, Lynette couldn't be honest and apologise, and instead took the tie and then left with brisk steps.

With complicated emotions, Lynette headed down the hallway towards Fiiru-sama.

But suddenly, a man called out to her.

"Heya, Lynette. You're working hard huh. What a good girl you are," called out an almost slimy voice.

It cause revulsion, and a little fear, to well up inside her.

"Thank you very much for your praise, Count Jalousie," she bowed mechanically, after forcefully suppressing her emotions.

"My maid's put on some tea. How about you have some with me?"

"I apologise, but I must head to Fiiru-sama."

"Just a little break is fine, right? Don't you need a breather too?"

"My apologise. I must serve Fiiru-sama, and so..."

"I see... What a busy girl you are. If you find some time, can you make me some tea too? Let's have a bit of refined fun."

"Yes, if I find the time."

With that, Lynette bowed once more before leaving.

Count Jalousie was a relative of Her Highness the Queen, and ignoring his fief, he spent his days loitering about the palace.

And as for his reputation amongst the servants, you would be hard-pressed to call it good. He would order servants about like it was his place, and cause them troubles. But because he was a relative of the Queen, nobody could caution him.

But the reason for Lynette's disgust and fear was different. It felt like his gaze for her was indecent. And not only that, he was over 30 years older than her...

Lynette wanted to believe that it was just her imagination. But she found it impossible to believe.

"I'll be looking forward to it."

Lynette's hairs stood on end. He had touched her below the hips.

"Yes..."

Her voice seemed to have withered away. After that, she told herself that she needed to head to Fiiru-sama and urged herself forward.

She asked her mother for advice before. But instead, these were the words she was met with.

"It's just your imagination. It was so hard to become Fiiru-sama's attendant. You can't start any problems. Just endure a little."

(I have to endure...)

Lynette felt the tears welling up as she walked, but she tried her best to stop them. It wouldn't do to appear in front of Fiiru-sama like that. She would surely worry for her, after all.

And she couldn't talk to Fiiru-sama about this either...

(It's fine. It's true that I'm busy as Fiiru-sama's maid. As long as I refuse all his invitations, it'll be fine. It has to be...)

Lynette continued to convince herself.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 46

Chapter 46

Some time passed after that.

Lynette was busy each day with Fiiru-sama, which meant that each day was peaceful as well.

But the rift deepened between her and the other maids. Lynette didn't mind. She had been raised as a maid since young. She had learned many things and many skills. Because she had such confidence in herself, she felt no need to try and improve their relationship. The other maids were no different. Because Lynette was younger than them, they looked down on her. But because they couldn't match her knowledge either, their jealousy simply grew.

Still, Lynette continued working hard for Fiiru-sama each day, despite these hiccups.

On one such day, a party was being held in the palace. It celebrated nothing in particular. The royal couple wanted to show Fiiru-sama off, while the other nobles wanted to form ties with her. Because of that, they often held parties like this.

As for the maids who were responsible for the things, it was hard to say that they welcomed them.

It was exhausting for Fiiru-sama as well. Every time she would be forced to accompany people until late into the night. Even so, she always dealt with them with a smile.

While Lynette worried for Fiiru-sama, she also felt dissatisfaction as she wished the two would care more about their daughter's health.

Even if she was Fiiru's personal maid, each party desperately needed helpers. During the party, even Lynette had to part from Fiiru-sama to help carry the many foods and drinks in, or assist with other jobs in the background.

It was when the party had gone on for about an hour that they were beginning to run out of wine.

"The wine is running out and I couldn't find the barrels. Would you know happen to know where it is?" asked Lynette.

"My," replied another maid, "If you need wine, then head to the corridor that leads to the Carnét Salon, and take the third door."

Lynette furrowed her brows.

"Isn't that just a normal room?"

And it was far too.

"Nobody was using it, so we decided to use it to store things for the party," she replied.

"You're a new maid so you probably wouldn't know, but we do it all the time," added another.

The words were laced with venom, but they were credible at least. It was quite like them to do things casually like this.

Because Lynette was well acquainted with their work ethic, what should have been suspicious was easily accepted.

"Would it be possible for you to bring it?" Lynette asked, but the maid smirked and shook her head.

"I'm sorry. We're too busy to leave this place."

It didn't look the case at all. In fact, it looked like that were loitering around. But it was a waste of time to argue with them, and to begin with she hadn't expected anything from them.

"I understand. I will go get it."

Lynette decided to go bring the wine herself. With a platform trolley to load the wine barrel onto, she headed to the specified room.

But Lynette had misunderstood the depths of their hostility. They would skip out on work, or push jobs onto her, but she assumed things like that were the limit. Although Lynette was more outstanding than any other maid, in the end she was still a child. Still too young to understand that a mix of hostility, a moment of indiscretion, and the power of group psychology, could turn a harmless prank into something brutal.

Although she knew it was a breach of manners, she was short on time and so Lynette ran down the hallway. When she rushed into the room, it was completely dark.

(Why are the lights...?)

If they were using it to store the wine for the duration of the party, then at least the torches should have stayed on. Otherwise, how was anybody supposed to find the barrels?

As Lynette stood a little dumbfounded,

-BANG-

the door shut behind her.

And in the next moment, she felt somebody's arms wrap around from behind.

"I'm so glad we're finally alonee together, Lynettee."

Lynette was struck by a chill that robbed her legs of her strength.

It was Count Jalousie's voice.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 47

She heard Count Jalousie's voice by her ear.
Her legs were shaking, and she couldn't speak.

(Why... Why...)

Her mind was in chaos. Why did this happen? Lynette didn't know.
Perhaps somewhere deep down she did. But she didn't want to admit it.
The smiles of the maids who told her to come her flashed endlessly though her head.
How could they do something like this just because they didn't like each other.
She couldn't believe it.
Right now she was in a dark room, being hugged by this count. She didn't want to believe.

But no matter how much her heart denied it, reality wouldn't change.

(I have to run...)

But although she thought this, her legs had no strength.

(Somebody...! Mum...!)

Her mother's face came to mind.
But———"Just endure a little"———what came to mind wasn't her mother's worry for her, but her mother's worry for her position as personal maid.
Would her mother even save her in this situation?
It was a terrifying question to her.

(Fiiru-sama...)

The next to come to mind was Fiiru-sama, but she was the star of the party.
She was busy, and it was impossible for her to appear here.

There was nobody else to save her.

Tears of despair ran down Lynette's face.

"There we go. That's a good girl. Just behave."

The Count smirked, and as about to stroke her body when,

"NOOOO!"

Lynette suddenly screamed and struggled to grab something in the darkness. Her hand made contact, and she swung it in reflex.

A dull sound rang out, and she heard somebody call. She couldn't feel the arm around her any longer.

Lynette frantically looked for the door in the darkness. Her hands desperately groped the wall, and upon making contact with a doorknob, she turned it. It opened. The Count hadn't locked it. Lynette immediately flew into the hallway.

Just the relief of being somewhere bright caused her to collapse powerlessly to the ground. But there was nobody in the hallway. Was it coincidence, or had the Count cleared people away?

(I-I have to run...)

But her legs still wouldn't move.

"I wonder if you know what you've done... Lynette..."

Count Jalousie appeared from beyond the door. When she saw his face, it felt like her heart stopped. There was anger mixed into his gaze now. A line of blood ran from his forehead.

"You've really done it now. A girl of a mere Baron's house actually used violence on I, a count, and relative of Her Majesty the Queen..."

"B-But, that was because you..."

"I just wanted to get to know you a little better. I don't know what you were thinking, but you actually misunderstood and then suddenly attacked me. The thing in your hand is proof."

A bloodied copper ornament lay in her hands.

It was unreasonable.

It was unreasonable, but she was at the disadvantage here.

There wasn't any proof that Count Jalousie had attacked her in that room. Considering the evidence they did have, as well as their two positions, it was a simple matter to see who would be blamed.

It wasn't a matter of who to believe.

Here in the palace, it was a simple matter for the guilty to push their crimes onto somebody weaker.

The maids would definitely not shield her either. Far from it, they desired this. Perhaps Fiiru-sama would cover for her. But Lynette believed that she would be hurt if she had to fight with her parents and everybody else. It wasn't possible for her.

"I don't think such a dangerous person is fit to serve by Fiiru-sama. Perhaps I should tell Her Highness this. Are you fine with that?"

Lynette gasped.

Again, she remembered her mother.

"You can't start any problems."

When Lynette was chosen to be Fiiru's attendant, her mother had said this to her.

"You can't lose your position. You're the hope for our 'distinguished maid family'. You have to make things work, no matter what happens."

If she lost her position because she started a problem now, what would her mother think?

"Please don't say anything to Her Highness... Please..." begged Lynette.

It was absurd...

She didn't know why she had to do this. She didn't know why she had to beg this man like this. But she couldn't betray her mother's expectations.

Hearing her words, the Count grinned in satisfaction. His grin caused her to shudder.

“Come now. I won’t treat you badly. All you have to do is listen to me. If you do, I’ll forget about your crime.”

Lynette nodded.

While flaunting his wound, the Count approached her, step by step.

Lynette couldn’t escape any more.

Even though the hallway should have been well lit, it felt like she was drowning in darkness. Even the Count’s voice seemed far away.

Even if she couldn’t run away, she wanted her heart to at least escape.

“What are you doing?”

Shockingly, the girl’s voice reached her clearly. Her voice resounded in this place that should have been only the Count and Lynette.

“P-Princess Fii!” exclaimed the Count, causing Lynette to look over as well.

From further down the hallway, the girl from the time at the well was now walking towards them. With the same golden hair as Fiiru-sama, wearing an outdated dress was this nation’s other princess.

(Ah-, she’s wearing it a little better now.)

The wrinkles in her dress were straightened out this time. For some reason that was what she was thinking about, despite the terror, exhaustion and disgust towards the Count.

With slow steps, Princess Fii approached them.

After stopping a distance away, she looked at Lynette on the ground, and then at Count Jalousie, before asking once more.

“What are you doing?”

The first one to reply was Count Jalousie.

“This girl used violence against me. Look, this is the evidence. Normally after doing such a thing, she would be disqualified as a maid! But I felt that it would be too pitiful, so I thought that I should train her myself a little bit in exchange for my forgiveness, you see. Isn’t that right, Lynette?”

It hadn’t taken long for the Count to come up with an excuse.

And right now, Lynette's position meant that she could only agree. Even if she went against him, it would still only bring harm to herself. If others found out about the problem, they would become stains that would threaten her position as Fiiru-sama's maid. Even if it was the Count who was in the wrong, it would surely be her who was censured.

Lynette couldn't lose this job. She needed it for both her mother, and her family. Even if Count Jalousie was in the wrong...

"Yes..." she nodded with a hollow expression.

"Well then, please excuse us. Lynette, let's go."

The Count moved to leave, and Lynette moved to follow.

"Hmm~ Evidence, huh? Show me."

But Princess Fii demanded the copper statue instead, and held out her hand to Lynette.

In other words, 'give it to me'. Although Lynette was bewildered, she looked at the Count and since he didn't seem to want to stop her, she obeyed.

"See? My blood is all over it."

After turning it around, and examining it at multiple angles, this time Princess Fii spoke to Count Jalousie.

"Count, please show me your wound as well."

(What is this girl... trying to do...?) Lynette couldn't help but think.

The moment that she injured the Count, Lynette had already lost all standing. No matter how wrong they might have been, as long as they came from a Count's house, as the daughter of a Baron, the harm would always be greater for her. Not only that, this time the Count had evidence to use against her. It was too late for her to do anything.

If she just... If she just endured a little... then the problem would resolve itself. She would be able to protect this position that her mother cared so much about. So she just wanted to get things over with...

"H-, Hahh...?"

Although the Count was also confused, he squatted down to show Princess Fii.

“Hmm~ So this is the evidence that girl hit you then.”

“Exactly right.”

No sooner had he agreed did Princess Fii raise the statue, and then smash it into his head with all her might.

“GUAHH!”

Apparently it had been quite a serious hit. Blood danced through the air, and the Count grasped at his wound as he sat on the ground. Lynette simply watched with wide eyes.

After writhing around for a while, the Count stood up and glared at both Princess Fii and Lynette.

“What on earth are you doing! Do you think I’ll let this slide!? Leaving you aside, that Lynette over there will definitely be fired!”

“Oh?”

Princess Fii simply laughed.

“You have evidence that you were hit, but where’s the evidence that it was this girl who hit you?”

Jalousie froze.

A new wound seemed to overlap the wound from earlier. And now, Princess Fii’s hand was soaked in blood.

Any observers would immediately come to the same conclusion.

“If that’s not enough, then I’ll hit you until it is!”

Princess Fii raised the statue again, and struck down once more. The merciless strikes caused the grown man to curl up in fear.

“HII! STOP! GYAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!”

Lynette could only watch on in shock.

Before long, the Count’s screams caused maids and guards to come rushing in. What they saw was a princess beating the crap out of a count.

“How terrible!”

“Please stop at once!”

In a panic, the guards dragged the count and princess apart.

The Count was holding his bloody head as he muttered curses.

“I won’t forgive you... I won’t forgive you...!”

But Princess Fii stared back, and spat coldly,

“You won’t forgive me? I am a Princess.”

Princess Fii’s position was quite odd in this palace.

She was as good as ignored by the royal family and great nobles, and was not treated as royalty. She had no favour with the King or Queen, and had no supporters at all.

At the same time though, she was certainly a princess of this country.

If you asked if she was normally treated as a princess, the answer would be a resounding no.

The maids took the bare minimum care of her. Her dresses were old and out-fashioned. She had never even been invited to any events.

Even so, she was a legitimate descendant of the royal family, and was undeniably a princess.

If she played the card that was her position, the retainers had no choice but to accept.

And Lynette realised something while she watched this.

If this girl really wanted people to treat her like a princess, she could make it happen.

It was a simple matter.

All she had to do was be selfish.

If she did, leaving the most powerful nobles aside, the maids and the other retainers would have no choice but to listen.

If she wanted to be treated better, she could have been. If she wanted beautiful dresses, she could probably secure a number of them as long as she ordered. But she, Princess Fii, never did so.

It was surely because she didn’t want to trouble the people around her. No matter how badly they treated her, and no matter what.

But just now she used her position to force them to listen.

(For my sake...)

“Hey. You lot know what the difference between a count and a princess is. Just looking at this man displeases me. Throw him out for me! And never let this man into the palace again! As Princess, I command you!” spoke Fii, just like a haughty princess.

The position of a princess was undeniably higher. Just like the difference between count and baron that had been used to threaten her... But it wasn't something that would end so simply. If it was only a matter of their hierarchy, then it would end right here. But if you forced things with your positions without the corresponding trust, it was inevitable that you would pay for it yourself. In the form of distrust, that is.

Although the guards did as she ordered, their gazes were cold.

“What on earth is she doing by causing a fuss like this...?”

“Because His Majesty doesn't love her, she's grown twisted hasn't she... How scary...”

“An arrogant princess like this is... She's too different to Fiiru-sama...”

They were badmouthing her even in front of her.

(You're wrong...)

Of course Lynette understood.

She knew that Princess Fii knew this would happen. That if she abused her power, her image would grow even worse.

And even knowing that, she did so to protect Lynette.

“And move it already. You're blocking my way!”

Paying no heed to their back-biting, Princess Fii's arrogant expression remained unfaltering, as she cleared the area of the people.

Eventually, it was only Princess Fii and Lynette.

The Princess squatted down in front of Lynette, and then with a kind, terribly kind smile, she spoke.

“I’m sorry that you had to go through something like that at the castle. Shall I bring you back to Fiiru?”

The warmth in her smile was no different to Fiiru-sama’s. Warm hands embraced her own, and pulled her to her feet.

Without letting go, Princess Fii pulled her all the way to the party where Fiiru-sama was waiting.

“It looks like Fiiru is tired as well, so please support her as her maid. Fiiru would be happier that way too.”

With that, she pressed her hands against Lynette’s back to urge her towards the party.

And without entering herself, Princess Fiiru began to walk away.

In panic, Lynette quickly bowed to Fii.

“Umm, thank you very much, Fii-sama...!”

After staring blankly for a while, she gave the same smile again and nodded,

“Yeah. You’re welcome.”

At the party hall, the King and Queen were snuggling against Fiiru in the centre of attention.

They were surrounded by many nobles, and were illuminated by light. None of them even noticed Princess Fii.

And neither did Princess Fii try to gain their attention. After bringing Lynette here, she quietly turned around and departed.

妹

After that, perhaps afraid of Princess Fii, Count Jalousie never showed his face in the palace again.

A year later he tried to repeat the same thing, but this time it was brought to light, and he finally lost his peerage as a noble. As it turned out, his connection with the Queen was a much smaller deal than he had bragged.

As for the maids that entrapped Lynette, to begin they were the useless ones, so they simply ruined themselves and disappeared as well.

But more importantly, what pained Lynette’s heart was that Fii’s bad

impression spread to every corner.

Lynette desperately wanted to defend her, but Fii told her that she didn't care and stopped her.

Fortunately, perhaps you could say, perhaps because Fii had little presence to begin with, the bad rumours quickly ran out of steam and people stopped mentioning them.

On the other hand, it also meant that when the Count's misdeeds were finally brought to light, Princess Fii's name was never cleared. This was something that Lynette found unbearable.

As one other consequence of this event, ever since that night, Lynette had a wish.

(I want to serve Fii-sama.)

Soon after the incident, Lynette told this to her mother, but what she received as a furious reply.

"What on earth are you thinking! Who would allow you to serve a princess like that! You're the hope of our 'distinguished maid family'. Fiiru-sama is the ultimate master. She will definitely marry in as the Queen of a large nation, and at that time, you can even become her first attendant! We've raised you all this time for this one chance! Don't say stupid things, and protect your current position with your all!"

(Fii-sama doesn't deserve to be called 'a princess like that'...)

For the first time, Lynette felt a little defiance towards her mother.

(To begin with, what value is there in a distinguished maid family?)

A 'distinguished maid family' wasn't a 'distinguished family'.

If they were a real 'distinguished family', to begin with there would be no need to become maids. There would be no need to be raised from childhood, spending hours each day doing nothing except learning the etiquette of servants, or repeating the method of brewing tea. There would be no need for antiquated practices such as poison testing.

There would be no need to be threatened by a man like that count... or to follow his irrational orders...

Her 'distinguished maid family' was just a Baron's family. That was the reality. Simply a low-ranking bunch whose entire family trained in the ways of a servant, and was used by royalty and higher nobility.

Still, if it was somebody she could serve with pride, Lynette could still see the value in doing so.

Fiiru-sama was certainly a wonderful personage. But Lynette was sure that even without herself, Fiiru-sama would still shine just like she did now. No matter what dress she wore, she would look beautiful, and there were plenty of others who would protect her.

And to Lynette, Fii-sama was a no less wonderful personage. But not a single person around her wanted to support her. Neither the people who did the laundry properly, not the people who managed the clothing properly, ever bothered to support her so that she could shine. Lynette was certain that the skills she had learnt would be of greater use to Fii-sama.

Although Lynette wanted to serve as Fii's maid, in the end her wish was never granted.

Had the King and Queen finally realised Lynette's worth? They showed no signs of allowing her to stop serving Fiiru. And each time Lynette asked for permission to do so, her mother would fly into a rage. Lynette couldn't become strong enough to oppose the mother who had raised her...

Still, Lynette never stopped wishing.

(One day I want to become a maid who can serve Fii-sama.)

It had been her dream since that day, and it was her dream even now.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 48

Chapter 48 – Doug

“Which of the newbies do you like?”

The palace maids were chatting to each other. Not about work, but about which of this year's newcomers they thought were good catches.

“I think they're all good this year.”

Not new maids though.

What these maids were discussing were the newly-arrived apprentice knights.

“If it's the Eastern Dormitory, I guess I'd choose Percil-kun. With his glasses he just looks so intellectual!”

“Doug-kun has a nice face too, doesn't he. His blonde hair is so silky, and his exotic features are really alluring.”

“Speaking of handsome faces, Rizil-kun's got a really good face too, you know.”

“But his hairstyle is a bit...”

“Yeah...”

“Luca-kun's not bad either. The way he's kind of pretentious and a bit of a playboy reminds me of Crow-sama.”

“Don't lump Crow-sama together with a guy like that!” snapped another maid.

“Hey, don't. Kiria is a fan of Crow-sama so she'll argue with you every time.”

“Ehh, but I thought they were pretty similar.”

“I guess they are in some ways, but the feeling you get is a bit different. Crow-sama gives you a frank feeling, while Luca-kun really does seem pretentious.”

“They’re not alike at all!”

“D-, Don’t argue with me too... Geez, this is your fault, Selia.”

“Ehh? My fault!?”

The atmosphere turned weird as Kiria continued to stubbornly insist that they weren’t even remotely similar.

One of the maids experienced with mediating conversations decided to try and change the subject.

“Then what about the Northern Dorm?”

“I think Geith-kun is good.”

“It’s cool how he’s silent and a little mysterious.”

“What about Xelius-kun?”

“He’s got a nice body. His face is manly too.”

“G-Gorms-kun!” shouted a blushing maid.

All the other maids looked at her dumbfounded.

“Umm, that’s a little...”

“That’s...”

“Well, I understand what you mean but that isn’t the kind of manliness we mean right now, so let’s pass on him.”

“Eehhhh...!?”

In the end, the maid who mediated earlier passed on the girl who suggested Gorms.

“Then what about Remié-kun?”

“Ahh, he’s kind of adorable, huh. And he’s really polite too.”

“He speaks to us with a smile!”

“Speaking of adorable, how about Heath-kun?”

“Heath-kun?”

“The small one!”

“Aahhh. He really is leaps and bounds beyond everyone in that respect.”

“Yeah, but a guy who’s even smaller than me is a bit...”

“But he’s so cute when he smiles.”

“Yeah, yeah. It’s like the smile of an angel!”

“The smile of an angel, huh. I guess that might be what it looks like.”

Without any idea that the maids were talking about them, the boys of the Northern Dormitory were about to once again engage in their afternoon training.

But the sight that greeted their eyes today was different.

Next to Instructor Hislo was a boy Fii had never seen before.

Dark skin, platinum blonde hair, and exotic features that seemed to hail from some distant country. His height was neither short nor tall.

With a serious expression, the boy was standing there with his hands behind his back.

And for some reason the other boys became noisy upon seeing him.

Fii had no idea who he was though. But well, she had been in this country for less than a year, so perhaps that was natural.

In a whisper, Fii asked the nearby Gorms, “Is that kid famous?”

With a slightly serious expression, Gorms nodded.

“Yeah. He’s another champion from this year’s knight apprentice exams.”

As the boys were still talking noisily, Hislo raised his voice.

“Silence! Today we have a transfer student. Because he wished strongly for it, he’s transferred from the Eastern Dormitory into the Northern Dormitory. His name is Doug, and he’s an apprentice knight with the 1st Division, as well as the disciple of Kaisar-sama, His Majesty Roy’s old fencing instructor. His sword skills were taught to him directly by Kaisar-sama. That should give you guys something to think about. Doug, introduce yourself.”

At Hislo's prompting, Doug took a step forward. Fii had thought that his introduction was about to begin. So did everyone else. But what came out of his mouth was completely different.

"Which one of you is the apprentice named Heath?"

"Heh...?"

Fii's eyes widened in surprise upon hearing the sudden mention of her name. Everyone turned at once to look at her. And apparently that gave her identity away. Following that, Doug's grey eyes turned her way.

Although he muttered "This tiny kid...?" as he widened his eyes in surprise, the seriousness returned to his expression in an instant. Thrusting his sword towards her, he announced, "Heath. I've come to challenge you. A one-on-one challenge as men. If I win, I'll have you pass your position in the 18th to me!"

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 49

Chapter 49

Doug's sudden declaration turned the crowd noisy.

"Oioi, he just challenged him..."

"Heath?"

"Isn't this guy crazy strong? Is Heath gunna be alright?"

"Don't tell me he transferred here for Heath's spot in the 18th?"

Doug and Fii stared at each other.

His grey eyes were locked onto Fii from behind his blonde hair.

"If you're really a knight, then you won't run," challenged Doug.

"Oi. Not so fast," interrupted Gorm. "Don't you think you're being pretty selfish?"

"Gorms from the Zalsik Dojo, huh."

"Oh? You've heard of me?" smirked Gorms as he looked downwards at Doug.

"This is really none of your business," argued Doug. "Mind not interrupting me?"

"No can do."

Pointing his thumb behind him at Fii, Gorms continued, "This kid is like my underling."

(Underling...!)

Fii had no recollection of becoming anything like that though.

“Ya think I can sit around if you pick a fight with him?”

“So what are you saying.”

The two boys glared at each other.

Watching them, Fii joined the conversation as well.

“Gorms! Friends are equal! It’s weird to have those higher and lower! I’m completely opposed to this!” she complained with her hand up.

“Slad,” said Gorms, “could you shut this retard up?”

Gorms decided to just remove Fii from the conversation.

“Yeah. Heath, I think it’s better if you stay quiet for the moment.”

“Yeah, Heath. I think it’d be better if you didn’t talk right now.”

“That’s right. I don’t think you should say anything...”

All three of his dormmates agreed, and Slad reached out to cover Fii’s mouth.

“MmMmMmnggmngg!”

Although they had no idea what Heath was saying, they all reached a wordless agreement to pretend she wasn’t there.

After appropriately dealing with her because she was failing to read the atmosphere, Gorms turned back to Doug.

“Heath is... Well, we’re pretending he’s not here right now, but if you want to challenge him, I think I’ll have you go through me first.”

With those words, Gorms turned his wooden sword towards Doug with a grin. Unfazed by the provocation, Doug nodded seriously in return.

“I’ll accept your challenge.”

“Oi, you lot! You’re in the middle of my training right now!”

Although for a moment it seemed like the two would begin duelling, Hislo put a stop to that.

But the fact that he didn’t interrupt until they agreed to a challenge just showed that he was reading the mood.

“I understand. Gorms. We’ll do it after training.”

“Aye. Ya’d better not run.”

“I wouldn’t.”

As the two stared at each other, the adult Hislo seemed to let out a nostalgic sigh even as he muttered complaints.

With that, the afternoon training finally began.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 50

Chapter 50

All the apprentices could talk about during training was the match between Gorms and Doug.

“Hey, who do you think is gunna win?”

“Kaisar-sama was the teacher of not only His Majesty, but also Zephys-sama, the Captain of the 1st Division. If Doug is his disciple too, doesn't that make him pretty strong?”

“Whoa, whoa, Gorms is pretty crazy too. He's never lost in our dorm.”

Gorms was the strongest member of the Northern Dormitory. By now, the apprentices had already started their sparring training, but Gorms had never lost once.

He had the power and the physique, and his sword strokes were accurate and forceful. But it didn't end there. Gorms also carefully observed the movements of his enemies and would react accordingly. He didn't just blindly rely on his strength.

“You know, I go to the same dojo as Gorms, and he used to rely a lot on just his strength, but ever since he entered this place he's been thinking a lot more in his battles.”

“If a person with his body uses their head to fight too, people like us don't stand a chance, huh.”

These boys knew well how powerful he was precisely because they had fought him before.

But they could also sense that Doug wasn't all talk either. That was because he was an apprentice in the 1st Division.

Although outwardly all knights were supposed to be equal, the fact of the matter was that besides the 18th Division, the 1st Division was known to be the most capable and powerful of all knights.

Captain Zephys held a lot of trust with the King, and the knights under him had both ability and character. Truly a group of exemplar knights.

Although Captain York's 18th Division was the dream of all the boys, their real goal was actually to become good enough to enter the 1st Division.

As for Doug who was accepted into the 1st as an apprentice of all things, just that alone was proof that he was top class.

Incidentally, Gorms was with the 2nd Division.

It was a rumour amongst the boys that the 1st to 3rd Divisions were all chosen based on ability, meaning that Gorms was also plenty amazing.

"Anyway, let's see how Doug performs in training."

"Yeah. I'll bet his running'll be amazing."

When running began, the boys found the rumoured transfer apprentice running at the end of the line.

He was pretty slow. Well, these two boys were pretty slow as well, but Doug was even slower...

"W-, Well... He's probably saving energy for the match, so of course he's not going all out here."

"Yeah, you're right."

Looking carefully, Gorms was also in the middle. At the front was Remié running by himself.

It made sense that they were conserving their energy, but to the boys who were hoping for a show, it was just a tad disappointing.

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Next to Gorms who was running slower than usual was Fii. By now, she had grown strong enough to run with the other boys. Well, having said that, she was still coming last though. Since she was keeping up with Gorms right now, she actually was pushing herself a bit.

“Gorms, are you going to be okay? He’s really strong, right?”

“Oh. You worried?”

“Yeah. Cause you’re my friend,” she pouted, with an oddly strong emphasis on ‘friend’.

Apparently she was still sulking about being called an underling.

“Hahh. Stop taking everything at face value. Calling you an underling was just an excuse to battle him first. You probably don’t stand a chance, after all.”

“Oh. Thanks!”

Since Gorms took back the underling comment, Fii thanked him with a pleasant smile.

Let’s keep it a secret that Gorms was silently thinking,

‘Who on earth would want a guy like this as his underling?’

“Well, I knew what Gorms was thinking too,” boasted Slad.

“Liar. You were totally pissed too!” retorted Geith.

“By the way Heath,” said Slad, “are you gunna be fine running at this pace?”

It was usually Slad and Geith in the middle.

Naturally, where they were now. That’s why it was worrying to see Fii running like this. Even if she had grown a lot stronger since her early days, running like this was still beyond what she could handle.

Even Fii gave a troubled look.

“Hmmm. We only just started, so it’s not too bad yet.”

Meaning that she was aware that she would suffer later.

As for her expression, it was because she was looking at the person at the end. And at the end, Doug’s eyes were staring right at her.

Slad and Geith realised too.

“Ahh. He’s completely locked onto you.”

“Geez, what does he want with me,” she sighed with creased brows.

With a guy like that, how could she return to the end of the line?

“Well, it’s because you’re in the 18th...” Geith said, pointed out the reality again.

“Does he really admire the 18th that much?”

Fii loved the 18th, and found it a great place to be, but to be honest she didn’t quite understand the dream of wanting to join it. The only reason Fii wanted to stay in the 18th was because she needed her papers as a knight, and because there were people who needed her.

“Well, I think everybody admires them to a degree, but maybe Doug is especially fixated...”

At the very least, nobody in the Northern Dormitory had thought of challenging Fii to steal her position.

“Yeah. That’s why he joined the Northern Dorm to begin with, hey?”

Even Slad who admired the 18th found Doug’s obsession to be a little weird.

“Well, just relax,” said Gorms. “I’ll send him flying for ya,” he declared with a clenched fist.

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After training ended, Gorms and Doug found themselves on the training grounds, pointing their wooden swords at each other.

“Hey, Transfer Student. You ready to lose?”

“I’m ready to fight.”

As usual, Gorms was wearing a condescending and villainous smile, but Fii and the others could tell that his eyes were serious.

As for Doug, his expression was level and serious, and he simply stared quietly back at Gorms.

The other apprentice knights stood around them expectantly. Instructor Hislo had work and wasn't here. Although he was strict with those who tried to skip training, he was surprisingly tolerant with things like this. Although he would get angry if you went too far, it seemed that he considered challenges like this as good training too. Or rather, he had done it quite a bit in his youth, or so the apprentices heard from Hislo's cohort.

Remié was the judge here— — —although all it involved was giving the starting signal.

Actually, he was given this role a lot, possibly because of how soft he was.

With swords in stance, Gorms and Doug stood about 5 metres from each other.

Standing midway between them was Remié.

The match was finally about to start. All the observing apprentice knights gulped in anticipation.

“Begin!”

The moment they heard Remié's voice, Fii and the boys were treated to a shocking scene.

The very moment that Remié shouted for them to begin, Doug had kicked off the ground and shot straight towards Gorms.

He was fast. So incredibly fast. From the moment he began, to the moment he stopped, he was fast.

Normally 5 metres was outside of one's engagement distance. But Doug had closed the gap in an instant. While Gorms was thinking about observing Doug, Doug's sword had already begun homing in on his throat. He was like a black wind.

“Wha-!?”

But although Gorms was taken by surprise, he swiftly moved to avoid it. Still, Doug's thrust was swifter.

He left a well-placed stab into Gorms' abdomen.

"Guhah-!"

Having taken the full brunt of Doug's attack, Gorms clutched his stomach and fell to the ground.

The strike had even taken away his consciousness. Doug looked down on the unconscious Gorms with the same subdued expression as at the start of the match.

"Gorms was taken down in one hit!?"

None of the observers could hold back their shock, Fii included.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 51

Chapter 51

When Gorms opened his eyes, he found a cute girl's face at super close range.

"WHOA!?" he cried as he jumped up.

"Ah-, you're awake," said a girl's voice.

From that voice, Gorms realised that this was Heath.

(Holy shit. If you just look at his face, he really does seem like a girl. I got confused since I just woke up.) Gorms calmed his heart with deep breaths. It seems that he had lost consciousness. Right now he found himself in the sickbay belonging to the knights. And apparently while he had been lying on bed, Heath had been looking after him.

At that point, he remembered the events that led up to this.

"Tsk. So I got done in, huh..."

"What bad luck."

Heath looked sad as she watched Gorms frown.

"Nah, not really. It's true that I was caught off guard, but I probably couldn't have avoided that speed even if I knew it was coming. And he seemed like he still had more power in reserve. Even if I avoided it, he probably woulda followed up."

Heath listened with a blank look.

"You're surprisingly calm about all this. I thought that you might be depressed about losing."

Apparently that was why she looked so sad earlier. She made expressions like that for losses that weren't her own? What a restless fellow she was.

"Dumbass. It's hardly my first time. I've lost a few times too. If I got depressed each time, how the hell would I get things done."

"Yeah. But you seemed so confident, so I thought that you hadn't even considered that you'd lose."

Well, to be honest, perhaps this was his first time losing against somebody his age. Although he had lost against the teacher at his dojo, as well as the stronger knight senpais, he couldn't recall a time losing to a boy his age.

Gorms also thought that he would have been depressed, but his heart was surprisingly calm about it.

Maybe it was because this kid next to him looked even sadder than he was.

For Heath's sake, Gorms grinned as usual.

"Because there's no harm in doing things with confidence. The worst that can happen is a bit of embarrassment when you lose. In exchange, you make the opponent think you're strong, and push them into thinking that they'll lose. Well, I am pretty strong though."

"Your way of thinking is really cool. I really respect you," Heath chuckled.

Since Heath was back to normal, Gorms returned to a neutral expression as well.

"But I won't be able to beat a guy like that for a while. I'll just have to train all over again so that I can keep up with those movements."

This was his opinion of the fight. Speaking frankly, he couldn't imagine any way of winning.

Explosive speed and power, chained one after another. It was hard enough to avoid them, and gaining the upper hand in the fight would have been close to impossible. Petty tricks would have been helpless before Doug's attacks.

There was no choice except honest training so that Gorms could keep up with his speed.

Maybe his old self would have grown stubborn and challenged Doug again and again. But Gorms had grown enough to calmly analyse the reasons for his

defeat.

Gorms happened to look at Heath.

(Speaking of which, the reason I can think like this is because of the tough fight with this guy.) Until Heath, Gorms' way of fighting was simply attacking in the shortest way possible, again and again.

Up until then, that way of doing things had led him to victory. He had superior power and reach, and just following those steps meant that he had almost never lost.

But then he met with this feeble pipsqueak who led him around by the nose, and he very nearly lost because of it. Gorms also learned from him what it meant to not give up.

To Gorms, who had thus far thought simply of matches, it was a huge change to his thinking.

"It looks like you'll have to give up the top spot in the Northern Dorm for a while."

Heath's expression was sad, like it had happened to herself. So Gorms gave another confident smile and replied,

"I'll let him borrow it for a while. One day I'll take it back."

"Yeah," Heath said, "That's really like you, Gorms."

Seeing his expression, she couldn't help but smile too.

"Well then," she said, "I'm going to head back. They told me to tell you to rest for the rest of the day."

"Tsk. I wanted to start training now," sulked Gorms, as he rested on his elbows.

"Geez, you're forbidden from overdoing things."

"Sorry I couldn't help you, Heath."

"Mn? Oh, don't worry about that."

For a moment she had tilted her head in wonder, but realising what he meant, she told him that things were fine.

But seeing her attitude made Gorms worry instead. To begin with, that strong transfer student had been here for her...

“Cya, Gorms. Let’s try our best tomorrow.”

But before Gorms could say anything, Heath had left the room.

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The apprentice knights were in an uproar in the dining hall.

“To think Gorms would be taken down...”

“And in a single hit too.”

They had discussed who was stronger before the match, but not one of them had thought that the result would be so overwhelming.

“What’s gunna happen. Heath is up next, yanno.”

“There’s no way he can win.”

Gorms was their strongest member, and he had been beaten in an instant. On the other hand, Heath was so weak that it would be quicker to count people she could beat. Nobody thought that she could win.

“Then does that mean Doug is going to join the 18th?”

“Would they even allow that? It’d just be something we randomly decided ourselves.”

“Idunno.”

Everyone had just gone along with it, but they didn’t have the right to dabble in HR to begin with. Was it even possible to swap apprentice knights? Nobody knew.

“Nah, look at how serious he is. He’s definitely got a plan.”

“Guess so. I mean, he even went out of his way to transfer.”

At any rate, Doug’s passion for the 18th Division was no joke. All the boys felt that he definitely had some plan.

“Ah-, Heath is here.”

At once, the dining hall grew rowdy.
Heath had been in the sickbay, looking after Gorms.
The moment Doug heard that name, he moved into action. Doug had been leaning against the wall with his arms folded, intent on waiting for Heath. And even though training was over, there was still a wooden sword hanging by his hips.

As Heath came down the hallway, Doug went to meet him.
Everyone gulped.
Remié was even watching Heath in worry.

The very moment that Heath ran into the dining hall, Doug drew the wooden sword from his hips and pointed it at Heath.

“It’s your turn, Heath. With your position in the 18th Division as the stakes, I challenge you to a match!”

As for Heath’s reaction,
“Eh? Why on earth would I accept? Are you an idiot?”
she rejected him without mercy, and passing him by, she went to line up for food.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 52

Chapter 52

The greatly anticipated match was casually turned down by Heath. And then as though it was no concern of hers, Heath went to sit with Slad and the others and started eating.

Doug was frozen with his sword brandished for a whole minute before he could move again.

With an anxious expression, he rushed over to Heath to challenge her again.

"F-Fight me!"

"No way. Didn't I just turn you down."

"WHY!?"

"Why? What kind of merit would accepting even have for me?"

As everyone heard Heath's reply, they all recalled her personality. Because of her small and cute appearance, at first glance she seemed weak. But in contrast she was strong-willed, wasn't afraid of anyone, and said exactly whatever she pleased.

Although she normally acted like an idiot, at heart she was a realist.

Everybody had gotten caught up in the momentum, but now an odd bit of calm came back to them.

Thinking about it carefully, as long as Heath didn't accept, none of this would be a problem.

And then considering Heath's personality, the chances of her accepting were

essentially zero.

But the boys all had a thought.
Couldn't she have handled it in any other way...?

Although they were all apprentices, they were still training to become knights. Even though it was hard to concretely describe what a knight was to them, at the very least they knew that knights were cool, probably. When a knight was challenged by another knight, they would accept and engage in a passionate battle with all their strength. At least that was how the boys saw it.

That was what they envisioned when Doug first arrived.
But...

Not fighting because there was no merit———It made sense... It made sense, but...

(It's kinda different to what we think of as a knight...)

Heath simply continued to eat, rejected Doug between bites. As these knights-in-the-making watched this unfold, they couldn't help but hold their heads.

"M-, Merits..."

Since she told him she wouldn't fight if it held no merits, Doug was frantically working his mind.

"Then... the dessert for tomorrow's dinner..."

"Are you actually an idiot?"

"The saber my family keeps as an heirloom———"

"Don't need."

"L-, Land...?"

"What am I supposed to do with that?"

Doug suggested the merits that he had frantically come up with, but Heath wouldn't budge at all.

Doug's eyes were starting to get a little teary.

But Heath's reaction was cold.

"E-Even if there's no merits, when a knight is challenged, his pride should———!"

"Hey. Listen. You say knight this, and knight that, but if I lose to you I'll lose all chances of becoming one to begin with, you know? The only people who need me are the members of the 18th Division. If I lose that, then forget pride, I won't even be able to eat. You really think I can afford to accept everyone's duels? If you get it, then get lost already, because I can't eat with you annoying me. Geez."

With that, Heath cruelly waved her hands, as though shooing away a dog. After that, she paid him no more heed and turned back to her food.

Although there had been no physical battle, it was Heath's overwhelming victory in this battle of words. Speechless, Doug just stood there silently for a while, completely ignored by her.

That day, Doug left dejectedly. And yes, his eyes were a little teary.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 53

Chapter 53

Since that day, Doug continued to thoughtlessly challenge Heath to a match.

"Heath, t-today is the day I'll have you fight me..."

"I told you, no."

What was thoughtless about it was that Heath would absolutely never agree. Perhaps because Doug knew that, his sentences always trailed off weakly.

But Doug couldn't think of any other ideas.

At any rate, he just tried his utmost to challenge her, but it was clear to everyone else that she would never agree.

"Fight me!"

"No."

"Fight me after this!"

"I refuse."

"Fight mee..."

"You're so annoying."

It was clear that with exchange, it was Doug taking the damage.

But by now there was no backing down——well, obviously, since he even transferred into the Northern Dorm for this——so for the whole week, Doug continued to recklessly challenge her.

“Doug, I can understand the feeling of wanting to reach your goals... I really understand... You’ve got passion. That’s a good thing, in and of itself... But when you bother other people because of that... that’s not good, right? Apprentice knights live as a group together, you know? Even Heath has complained.”

“Y-, Yes...”

Heath had ruthlessly told on him.

After listening to Hislo’s somewhat half-hearted lecture, an hour later Doug emerged feebly from the instructor’s room.

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The Northern Dormitory was home to a bathing area for the exclusive use of the apprentice knights.

It was housed on the first floor of the dormitory, and had access to clean water. From there, knights would draw out the water to wash off the sweat and dirt from their training.

Because the bathing area was partitioned into stalls with curtains, it was possible to clean oneself away from the eyes of others. Not only that, each stall was surprisingly big, so it was possible to bring in ones clothes too.

Why was it built like this? Back in the day, there had been no partitions because the apprentices would bond together as they cleaned themselves. But one particularly straight-laced knight complained that wandering around naked together, even amongst other men, would bring their characters as knights into question.

The result of that were these stalls.

As for Fii, she couldn’t thank the guy enough.

Because of him, didn’t have to worry about a thing, and could bathe whenever she wanted.

And as a girl, Fii loved bathing.

After all, it felt great to clean one’s body, and the cold water felt especially good after training.

“Hmhmhm~♪”

She even started to hum.

“Ah-, Gorms! There’s no more soap! Lend me yours!” she shouted.

Gorms was in the stall next to her.

“Again? Here. I’ll lend you one.”

“Thanks! When I go shopping next time, I’ll buy you a new one, okay?”

A bar of soap came flying from above the partition walls. Fii caught it with a smack, and began to carefully clean herself after lathering it over herself. While she was scrubbing away at her ankles, she heard Gorms getting out.

“Oh? Are you done already, Gorms?”

“You just take too long.”

“Ehhh, but it feels so good.”

Having cleaned just what he needed, Gorms left Fii behind.

Well, it wouldn’t help to rush, so Fii continued to carefully clean.

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Doug was lost in thought as he poured cold water over his head.

(I wonder what I should do...)

Instructor Hislo had a point. Doug couldn’t argue with Heath either. But he hadn’t given up.

Doug had an idol.

Captain York, of the 18th Division.

Apparently he had been taught by Doug’s master, Kaizar. In other words, York was Doug’s Senior Apprentice Brother.

Not only that, but according to Kaisar he was “The most talented student I’ve ever had.”

Four years ago, York had entered a martial arts competition just once. His swordsmanship had wowed Doug.

Even though York's opponent had been a famous knight, York had closed the distance in an instant, and defeated him with one blow. He was like a flash of black lightning.

Ever since then, York had always been Doug's greatest idol. One day he wanted to work under him.

But when Doug became an apprentice knight, he heard an unbelievable rumour.

Apparently a boy had entered the 18th Division as an apprentice.

All members of the 18th Division were scouted personally by York. In other words, they all had enough talent and ability to draw York's eyes.

Because of that, Doug had assumed that there was no option except to train hard to become an apprentice and then earnest work as a knight to catch York's eye.

But apparently this apprentice knight had directly entered the 18th. It was unprecedented.

Doug couldn't stand it. He begged again and again to be transferred into the Northern Dormitory, and because of his passion, his request was finally granted. And when he saw Heath, Heath's small, delicate frame had shocked him.

After all that, Doug defeated Gorms who stood in his way, and finally challenged Heath, but he was rejected...

He had never even considered that he might be rejected.

Doug didn't really have a reason, but he just assumed that if he won then there was a chance his wish would be fulfilled, and even if he lost, there might be something he could learn from it.

But he was rejected again and again, and never even got to fight. His transfer here had been meaningless.

(What am I supposed to do in this situation...)

Doug agonised over the problem. And then he came to a conclusion.

(There's really no option except to fight...!)

But lately Doug had been so annoying that Heath would run away at the mere

sight of him. Far from fighting, Doug couldn't even issue his challenge now.

And then he realised something.

(But in here, he can't run...!)

Doug had seen Heath coming in here to bathe as well. And he hadn't heard Heath leave.

Heath was still here.

If Heath was in a stall, then it was a dead end.

Doug made up his mind, and splashed a final bucket of water onto himself before wiping himself dry and changing.

And then he stood in front of Heath's stall.

Ready to challenge Heath, he pulled open the curtain.

"Heath! Today is the day that... I..."

"Mn eh?"

Doug turned into a statue.

What lay beyond the open curtains was the sight of a blonde-haired, naked girl...

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 54

Chapter 54

When Fii turned around, she noticed the open curtains, and then the frozen Doug. With this, she knew what had happened.

(Guess I'm totally busted, huh.)

Well of course. He had seen her naked, after all. Doug's face was bright red like a tomato, and his mouth flapped open and shut as he stood there.

On the other hand, Fii was mysteriously calm. She did feel a little embarrassed, but perhaps she kept her cool because Doug was so shaken instead.

As Fii looked at Doug, whose brain had stopped working from all the panic, Fii boldly decided on her course of action.

First of all, it was a bad choice to hide her body. It would mean that she had something to hide.

Fii found out after she joined that there was no rule against females applying as knights, but the reason was actually because no woman in Orstoll had ever applied.

The whole system had been built with the assumption that all the knights were male.

If they found out, at worst she could be fired. At least, that was what she thought.

Fii recalled Conrad-san's teachings. The one she wanted was his teachings on negotiations and emotions.

Most people had two types of emotions. The type that they vented outwards, and the types that they took in from around them.

For example, when it came to laughing, it was separated into laughing because you found it funny, and laughing because you were influenced by others' laughter.

For the latter, it was because they sensed from the environment that they should be laughing, and reacted by finding it funny as well.

In other words, people's moods were influenced by the atmosphere.

What this meant for human relations was an interesting consequence.

When it came to a misdeed, there were people who felt shy about it, and people who did not.

Which of the two groups were scolded more?

Normally you would assume it was the people who were bold about their actions.

But that wasn't always the case.

As long as you were bold enough, it was possible to infect others with the idea that 'You did nothing wrong.'

And when you instead gave the idea that you had something to be guilty about, it could induce people's anger instead.

In the end, sometimes people would be angrier at the reflecting party.

Perhaps it would be easier to put it in reverse.

Sometimes you would have something wrong done to you, but the other party was so bold that you even forgot you were supposed to react with anger.

It would only be upon later recollection that you would get mad.

Sometimes when you should have been angry, people around you treated it so naturally that you didn't even know how to feel.

The atmosphere would influence your judgement on how you should have been feeling, and the result was that your emotions failed to coalesce into anger.

In other words, there existed the option of acting guilt-free to avoid somebody else's anger.

Of course, there were caveats to this.

It would only work when the other party hadn't coherently grown outraged yet.

If they were already angry beyond a certain point, being bold and unrepentant would only spur on their inner anger.

And once you had already played the card of being unrepentant, it would be impossible to gloss over the situation with apologies and reflection.

Because of that, one had to be careful in its use.

Most of the time, even if it meant legitimising their anger, it would be better to simply apologise and appease them.

But Fii had decided that now was an appropriate time to act boldly.

If Fii tried to hide anything, it would signal to Doug that she had done something to feel guilty of. She would fall into disadvantage, and she couldn't afford that right now.

At the moment, Doug was feeling purely embarrassment and panic. He hadn't yet gained any reason to scold her.

If she was going to do it, now was the time.

Fii looked boldly at Doug without hiding her body, as spoke as though it was no problem for her.

"Oh? So you've opened the curtains and come in, huh. Did you want to peek on me bathing or something?"

Hearing her words, Doug frantically shook his head as he blushed.

"AH-, THA-... N-NO-..."

"Hmmm. Then could you shut the curtains already? How long are you going to keep watching."

"AA-AH...! S-S-S-SORRY!"

Prompted by Fii, Doug shut the curtains in a fluster.

After that, for a while Fii could hear him staggering around and bumping into walls, before finally disappearing somewhere.

She had avoided the most immediate crisis.

Had he caused a fuss here, people might have come running in here, one after

another.

She had removed any chance of that happening.

All she had to deal with now was Doug.

Since he had only just arrived here, he still had no close friends.

Because Doug didn't have anyone he could speak to freely yet, for now her secret was safe.

(Before he has time to think, I need to teach him who's really in charge...)

Wiping her body, Fii put on her apprentice knight's uniform, and quietly left the bathing area.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 55

Chapter 55

Dear Ve**ullis,

Are you just here to annoy me? I don't really care if you don't like the story, but can you not complain on my turf? It leaves a completely bad after-taste after working for hours to get this translated.

To sum up, your commenting here is a privilege, not a right, and that privilege is only extended to people who don't piss me off. I translate because I want comments about people enjoying the story. Why else am I doing all this? Certainly not money.

Also don't talk to Chronos that way. You don't have the capital to be warning her of anything.

Love,
the translator

The next day, the members of the Northern Dormitory were greeted with an odd sight.

Recently, it had become a regular sight to see Doug chasing Heath around. But for some reason, it was Doug avoiding Heath today.

One thing was on Doug's mind.

(Does everyone know...? That she's...)

For a moment, the image almost surfaced in his mind, but Doug panicked and shook his head to clear it.

He couldn't. It was forbidden to imagine it.

In the blink of an eye, Doug's face flushed red again.

(W-W-Why is there a girl here...?)

How could he have imagined that Heath was a girl...?

But he was sure he hadn't made a mistake. Because that body was...

And again, Doug almost thought back to the sight from yesterday. And again, he shook his head in a great panic. Doug's heart had been pounding like mad for a while now.

Actually, now that he knew she was a girl, it suddenly became incredibly obvious from her looks alone.

First there was her dainty body that was completely different to a man's. Then there was her height, and even her face was that of a girl's. She didn't have many curves though...

Since he had assumed that there wouldn't be any girls here, he had mistakenly assumed that she was just a small boy.

There was no rule that forbade women from being knights. Or rather, no girl had ever tried becoming one, so nobody had even thought about it enough to form rules.

(What am I supposed to do...)

Doug's head was in chaos now.

Did everyone know that Heath was a girl? Or did they live with her without knowing a thing? Since he didn't really know anyone here, Doug had no idea.

Normally you would think that she was hiding it. How could there be any girls in the Knight Order? But she didn't seem to be hiding it at all.

Unable to talk to anybody about this, Doug decided to simply avoid Heath. And just as Doug was passing by a deserted break area, a voice called out to him from behind.

"Doug-kun, it's time to have a chat. With me, that is."

When Doug turned with a start, he found Heath there.

She was leaning lazily on the couch, and munching on cookies bought from town. Even though she looked like the very definition of relaxed, her eyes were locked onto Doug with a glint.

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Fii had been waiting here the whole time for him. She had already heard this morning that Doug had been wandering about in a daze. In that case, it made sense that he would wander to a deserted place like this.

That was the plan.

It was absolutely necessary that it was only the two of them. It was incredibly bad news for Fii that somebody knew she was a girl. But she kept it off her face so that he would never know. Doug was the one in the wrong here. Fii was the one doing the blaming. It was essential that she create that kind of atmosphere.

“Sit down,” she said, as she offered him a chair. All as her eyes told him that she wouldn’t take no for an answer.

Under her glare, Doug could only obediently sit opposite her.

“Ah... Um...”

“Say. Did you peek on me because you thought I was a man? Or did you peek on me because you knew I was a woman?”

Before Doug could say anything, Fii cut him off and replied with a pre-emptive strike.

She was the one who was in charge here.

“T-, That’s not-... I never-...!”

“Well, I don’t care either way. It doesn’t change the fact that you peeked.”

Fii didn’t care what he said. By denying him the opportunity to express himself, Fii would take the reins of the conversation. And while she was at it, she would gouge at his weaknesses.

That was her aim. And apparently it had worked.

“N-N-N-Never...! I wouldn’t...”

Doug looked flushed and panic-stricken, and near the end his voice had grown hoarse. Things seemed to be going pretty well. Perhaps even more effectively than she had imagined.

In their previous exchanges, Fii had realised that Doug was on the simplistic side of people.

Although he was good with the sword, he wasn’t good with talking or communication.

If anything unexpected happened, he would immediately fall into a fluster, and the time in the bathroom he had turned bright red and stumbled about like a headless chicken. Because he often wore a serious expression, at first he seemed like the cool type, but in fact it was the opposite; whether he was being serious or whether he wasn’t, his emotions would always be laid bare on his face.

Being frank about your emotions meant that you would be easily influenced by the mood. And when your emotions were easily changing, it was impossible to influence the mood with your own emotions.

Fii was certain that this could work.

“You know, we generally call people like those “perverts”. A guy who peeks on a girl taking a bath is a pervert, and a guy who peeks on guys taking a bath is another kind of pervert. If this ever got out, you’d never be able to stay in the Order, would you?”

The whole conversation was going to proceed on the basis that Doug was in the wrong.

The truth was that Fii would be overwhelmingly worse off if this ever got out.

But Doug was already convinced. First Fii’s attitude was too bold. Secondly, Fii had been using the atmosphere to continuously convince him that he was the one in real danger here...

Doug couldn’t stop the sweat running down his skin.

“If it went public that you were a voyeur, it’d probably damage the 1st Division’s reputation, huh. And if that happened, it’d be entirely your fault. You’d be disqualified as a knight, you know? So what are you going to do?”

“What am I going to do...? W-What am I supposed I do?”

Naturally this was a question with no answer.

The whole problem hinged on whether Fii went public or not, so to begin with it was impossible for Doug to come up with any sort of plan.

But well, even that was one of Fii’s tricks.

Normally it would be Doug choosing whether or not to go public, and Fii trying to prevent it. But because of Fii’s incredibly unashamed attitude, and the constant attacks on his weaknesses, their situations had completely reversed.

By now, Doug was feeling pure panic.

“Peeking”

“Pervert”

“Disgrace”

“Disqualified as a knight...”

Each word pressured him psychologically, and having believed that Fii was the one in charge here, he reflexively gave her a begging look.

The moment she saw those eyes, Fii was assured of her victory.

“Don’t worry. Just this once, I’ll cut you some slack.”

“R-, Really...!?”

Even though she should have been the one in trouble, Fii completely acted like she was the one doing him the favour. As for Doug who seemed overjoyed that she had “saved” him, Fii looked at him and nodded in affirmation.

“In exchange, I expect absolute obedience, you know?”

“Eh...?”

It was almost as though Doug couldn’t understand Fii’s words.

“Absolute obedience,” she repeated, slowly and carefully.

“Eh-, eh...? Why...?”

It wasn’t that he didn’t understand the words, but rather that he couldn’t believe what was happening to him.

“You still don’t get it? Doug, whether or not you can continue living here as an apprentice knight depends entirely on my mood, you know? If I ever felt like it———”

The cookie she had been eating rested on the palm before his eyes.

“———Your life here...?”

And as though hinting at Doug’s future, Fii crushed the cookie with a sickly crunch.

“That’s why if I tell you to do something... you’d better not disobey me. Okay?”

With that, the boy who was known as having an angel’s smile———actually a girl though———smiled at Doug with the face of a devil.

Given that he lacked the negotiation skills to deal with Fii to begin with, now that he had been driven to the wall psychologically, all Doug could do was nod.

“Yes...”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 56

Chapter 56

Hello friends,

It's not that you can't complain. It's perfectly reasonable to complain that you don't like this new development, or that you aren't really too happy with this new character.

But if I check your comment history, and find out you've been commenting **nothing but** complaints, criticisms and oddly aggressive opinions, you had better not expect to have the privilege of commenting for much longer.

Ve**ullis, compare yourself to the other people who have been complaining about Doug, and have a think about what you did differently.

Sincerely,
the translator

That day, a rather strange scene unfolded at the dining hall.

"Doug, bring me dinner. I think wieners, with salad and corn soup would be nice."

"Yes."

At Fii's command, Doug ran to line up.

Although Fii was acting like it was her birthright, the people around her couldn't understand what was happening.

Up until yesterday, Doug had been chasing her around to challenge her while she either coldly rejected him or avoided him before he was a bother.

So then why were they now...

As the boys looked over at Fii who was relaxing in her chair as she waited for Doug to deliver the food, they all thought one thing.

(What the hell have you done now, Heath...)

Fii was famous in this dorm for being the owner to a 'despicable' personality. She was cheerful, yes, and she was sociable. If anybody was having problems, she would immediately go to help them. Even though she should have been such a nice boy, the way she fought was dreadful and dirty. Stomping on people's toes came naturally to her, and sometimes she would even pretend to drop her sword and then use that opening to launch surprise attacks. Sometimes she would throw her sword, and in close quarters she would often kick them through any opening possible. Even though Fii wasn't very strong overall, and even though her small body lacked much power, she was one of the hardest fighters to deal with in the whole dorm. In contrast to her favourable personality, it was possible to see her nasty sides during her matches .

The fact was that Doug and Heath's positions had reversed overnight. All the apprentice knights were certain that she had done something despicable again, just like in her matches. Almost everybody also vowed in their minds to let sleeping dogs lie.

But Remié, who had the healthiest attitude in this dorm, tried to stop her. Despite how pale he was, he desperately tried to persuade Fii.

"Y-, You're going a little bit too far, Heath. It's true that he stubbornly followed you around, so I know that you found him unpleasant, but,"

Fii held up her index finger and replied seriously,

"No. How you treat them in the beginning is the most important."

Fii considered her actions to be emergency measures. Just saying "Don't tell anybody I'm a girl" was no good to her. It would just bring her weakness to Doug's attention. Unless she controlled Doug on a more comprehensive level, she wouldn't be able to avoid the risk of her secret being leaked.

To that end, she used Doug's weakness to demand absolute obedience from him. She needed a way to stop him from revealing her secret until he truly was obedient as well.

"Just so you know, I don't plan on treating him like this forever, okay. It's just in the beginning that I'll order him about like this. It's so that he learns to obey me."

Fii herself had planned on stopping this once she was sure that he wouldn't let people know she was a woman.

He caused her some problems earlier, sure, but Fii still saw him as a fellow dorm member.

But when the boys around her heard her explanation, what they all thought was...

(Isn't this exactly how you train a dog...?)

As they were all astounded, what really stood out were two things. First, her way of thinking just showed how despicable she was to the core. Second, although this transfer student had come in and caused a mess, it made them tremble to see him reduced to a dog like this.

But Fii was completely indifferent to it all and simply smiled as Doug came back with food for two.

"Plus, it's not like I'm having him listen to me for free!"

Fii got out of her seat and sat Doug down there in exchange. Then, with an inexplicably tragic and determined expression, Fii stabbed one of her three wieners with a fork.

"As thanks for listening to me, you can have one of my precious wieners as a reward!"

Most of the menu was free to as many helpings as you wanted, but wieners were rationed out. To Fii who loved eating, giving away one of her wieners felt akin to giving away her lifeblood.

But that wasn't how the boys saw it.

'If you listen to me, I'll give you food'

It was dog training, no matter how you saw it. It was undeniable now.

“Come on. Aaaahn.”

Paying no heed to the stiff expressions around her, Fii held out the wiener to Doug’s mouth.

“N-, No, I can eat by... myself...” replied Doug, a little flustered.

Still, Fii didn’t stop.

“Aaaahn!”

Sticking to her guns, she pressed Doug to open his mouth.

Having seemingly given up on something, Doug opened his mouth with his face a little red.

Like that, Doug had a wiener placed into his mouth and was forced to chew it up.

Watching Doug eating the wiener, Fii happily patted his head.

“Good boy, good boy!”

At this point, he was being treated like a dog from every angle.

Or rather, even Fii herself was reminded of how she wanted a dog as a child but wasn’t allowed to have one.

No matter how unfamiliar they were with him, the apprentice knight boys couldn’t help but sympathise with this transfer student-turned-dog as they shed tears of sorrow for him.

But as for Doug himself, for some reason he felt a little happy...

Well of course he was. Having spent his youth training in the sword, he never had much opportunity to interact with a girl.

<https://tamakeribanchou.wordpress.com/2016/06/09/doug-sketch/>

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 57

Chapter 57 – Crow-san's Worries

"Hmm."

In the 18th Division's gathering place, Crow was sitting on a sofa with a difficult expression.

Since Fii felt it was rare, she walked over to talk to him.

"Crow-san, are worrying over something? It must feel so strange for you," she said, looking in from the side.

Naturally, Crow exploded with a chop.

"OWOW!"

"You're talking like I'm a person who never worries at all..."

"Was I wrong? Don't you spend all day chatting up women?"

"I won't deny it, but being told that by an airhead like you is kind of a piss off."

"That's mean! How can you just call other people airheads like that!"

"You're one to talk!"

Fii was now frowning as well.

"Just to let you know, it's not so easy to find somebody with as many worries as me, okay!" boasted Fii.

Crow's eyes narrowed in disbelief.

"Oh? Worries? Let's hear it then."

"There's the issue of what to eat for dinner, and there's the issue of what I

should reward Doug with, and then there's the issue of whether I should eat bread with soup tomorrow or if I should eat it with butter, and if whether eating some cookies would put me over my food intake for example."

"Aren't most of those about food?" sighed Crow.

Incidentally, since Doug's reward was also going to be a food, her worries were in fact 100% food-related.

"Well, leaving the jokes aside, if you want to talk about it, I'll listen, you know?"

"Even if I talked to a little kid about it... You know?"

Crow had apparently no hopes for her. Fii became a little angry.

"Muu, at least tell me. Maybe you'll find a solution right away."

"Alright then. Three days from now, I'm going to go eat dinner with a woman, but it's not a place I really know. I wanted to try eating there, but it's not a place that lets you dine solo."

"I seeeee. I have indeed listened. Well then, time to head to Kain-saGUEH-"

As Fii was about to run off, her collar was grabbed from behind.

"I really didn't have any hopes for you, but it's kind of annoying to hear such an unwilling reply," he slowly said as he held on tight to stop her escaping.

Fii turned around and replied,

"But I really wouldn't be of any help anyway. Please let go of me! I need to go kill some time at Kain-san's!"

"Didn't I tell you? Talking to a kid like you was pointless."

Even though Fii was the one who told Crow to talk about it, she gave such a reluctant reply. So Crow stood up, holding her like a cat. She skilfully twisted this way and that, but with her neck held, getting loose was apparently quite difficult.

Perhaps she eventually gave up, because she just went limp.

"Can't you just ask some girl to go with you?"

"No way. Nobody would feel happy about going as a test partner," he replied.

Fii blinked in surprise.

“To think you were so considerate about that.”

“Exactly what kind of guy do you take me for...”

Hitting Fii on the head again, Crow sighed.

“Well, I guess there’s just winging it on the day, huh. I wanted to at least check the menu to see if it was appropriate.”

Suddenly, Conrad’s voice appeared out of nowhere by Crow’s side.

“My, then don’t I have a plan for you.”

As usual... in women’s clothing. Seeing him, Crow began to sweat uncomfortably.

“Don’t tell me you want me to go with *you.”

In response, Conrad place a finger at him lips and went “Hmmm,” before giving a bewitching smile.

“I wouldn’t mind that either, but I’ve actually got another candidate for you. It’s good practice for them as well.”

With that, Conrad looked right at Fii. As for Fii, she simply stared blankly at him in confusion.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 58

Chapter 58

"Candidate? Who?" asked Crow in confusion.

Conrad smiled impishly.

Incidentally, Fii was looking around in wonder as well.

"Heath-chan of course," he stated to both of them.

Both of them looked equally shocked.

Crow started to frown.

"Yanno, he might have a girly face, but he's still technically a guy, okay."

"Y-Y-Y-YESH I AM! I AM A MAN!"

It felt a bit strange to be saying this to Conrad who already knew she was a girl, but she would be in trouble if Crow and the others found out.

But instead, Conrad even told her to put on women's clothing and go around with Crow. Wasn't that incredibly risky?

At any rate, she was a man right now. No, not just a man! A man amongst men!

"But if you're doing infiltration missions, it won't always be men's clothing. Sometimes it has to be women's too. This will be good practice for you."

After that, Conrad began to each of them, starting with Crow.

"You don't have anyone else to ask, right? There's no one left but your nice kouhai, right? And if it's a guy, there won't be any trouble later, right?"

Next was Fii's turn.

“The best place to hide a tree is in a forest, you know? Showing him that you’re dressing up like a woman will actually hide the truth even more, you know? And I’m suuure he’ll feed you all sorts of delicious food, you know?”

The duo fell silent.

Although Fii’s tongue had gotten a little sharp when she heard him talking about dates with women again, she liked Crow very much, and respected him too. He treated her well in many ways, and she owed him.

If her identity was safe, then perhaps it would be better to pay him back by going with him...

Fii was beginning to reconsider.

And after a moment, she had to slurp back the drool that ran down her mouth.

As for Crow, apparently he really wanted to check out the restaurant, so he sighed in acceptance and turned to talk to Fii.

“Are you fine with this? Even if you might need it for a mission later, a guy can’t enjoy being dressed as a girl, right?”

“I’m fine with it.”

Fii’s expression was completely nonchalant.
She was a girl after all.

After thinking for a while longer...

“I really would like to check the place out. Can you help me, Heath?”

“Yes. Please leave it to me,” she replied, thumping her chest.

Looking like he was enjoying things, Conrad lifted Fii right up by her nape and began walking off with her.

“Well then, I’d better give my all in making you look good~”

“Eeh, just whatever is fine...”

As Crow watched Conrad drag her into the next room, he said, “Well, at least make him look good enough that we actually get let into the restaurant.”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 59

Chapter 59

After waiting for a while for the two to come back, Crow saw Conrad come out first.

"Huh? Where's Heath?"

He had been sure that they would come out together.

"I chose the clothing, but I left him to put it on himself. If he can't even do that, it won't be very good practice, right?"

"You sure he can do it? It's women's clothing, yanno."

"It's fine. He's my number one disciple."

Conrad gave an impish and enrapturing smile, but Crow just looked incredibly weary.

"I really don't want Heath to end up like you..."

"My, you prefer them without makeup?"

"That's not even what I'm talking about. I meant that I want Heath to grow up to be a wholesome and healthy kid, alright?"

"Hmm. So you *are* worried about him."

"Obviously. He's like my little bro."

Conrad replied with a meaningful smile.

From what Conrad could remember, Crow often played and dated with all sorts of women, but never had he ever paid attention any girl for as long as this.

But well, it was a secret that Fii was a girl, and Crow hadn't seemed to have noticed either.

(He's got a good face, and he pays attention to how he treats women, but at heart this guy is dense too, isn't he~) Conrad smiled as he watched Crow, who was leaning on his elbows waiting for his kouhai to appear.

"Huhu, well then, let's wait for your precious little bro to make his appearance."

After they waited for a while, things suddenly grew noisy on the other side of the door.

For some reason Crow felt mysterious relaxed hearing them.

They were the footsteps of the incredibly energetic kouhai of the 18th who would always come flying on.

"I've kept you waiting~"

But when Heath opened the door, Crow's eyes widened.

The person who stepped out of there was unmistakably a girl. She was wearing a red, and slightly mature dress, along with matching black high-heels. Her long brown hair was weaved, and there was just a bit of makeup on her face.

Although there was still a little immaturity left in her features, there was a strange charm in the way it resembled a young girl acting mature.

that was the kind of girl who appeared.

Seeing Crow stunned like that caused Conrad to chuckle, apparently having fun from the depths of his heart.

As for the girl, she tried a few strange poses in front of Crow as she checked how she looked, before finally asking Crow himself.

"How is it, Crow-san? Is there anything weird?"

It was only after hearing her voice did he realised the girl was Heath.

To be honest, Crow thought that he had been careless.

Certainly, this kouhai had a girly face, and a dainty body. He had teased her numerous times for it.

But he had thought that because of that, she wouldn't look too different in women's clothing. But...

(I can only see him as a girl...)

Crow was aware of Conrad's ridiculous disguise skills. Once Conrad was crossdressing, he looked just like a woman. But before all of that, he was 'Conrad', so Crow really never thought too much about it. Nor did he want to... But when Crow looked at Heath in these clothes, he really started to see him as a real girl.

(Did Conrad teach him this...?)

Even though it was just makeup, a dress, and a wig, Heath's impression had completely changed. Were it Conrad, he would have just thought 'Crossdressing again, huh?' but with Heath it seemed completely different.

Since Crow just watched her without reaction, Fii tilted her head in confusion.

(I wonder what's wrong. Wouldn't he usually tease me? Could it be that I messed up so badly that he's shocked? Nono, I'm a real girl, so it can't look too weird. No, but then I've gotten really manly thanks to my training, so maybe it's like ingrained now? Hmmm, if that's really what happened, I'm not sure if I should be happy or sad about that...) Fii started making weird poses again as she looked at herself, but in the end, she felt happy.

(In other words, I've gotten yet another step closer to being a real knight, huh? Heh!) It was only upon seeing Fii's stupid face did Crow finally think "Yep... It's heath".

"Nah, it doesn't look weird. You actually look totally like a girl. So I'm begging you, stop making such weird poses. If you do that in public, I'll look like a weirdo too."

"I see! Heh! If a playboy like you says so, then my disguise skills must really be perfect!"

At Crow's praise——although the latter half wasn't——Fii didn't overthink things and happily did a fist pump.

(Like this, I can only see him as Heath.)

Once he started talking to her, he realised she was just Heath as usual, and for some reason let out a sigh of relief.

On the other hand, Conrad who was watching the two muttered in his mind, (What I taught her wasn't disguise skills though~)

What Conrad had taught Fii had all been normal techniques to help a girl look cuter. How to do her hair, how to wear her clothes cutely, and how to use makeup to increase her charm.

Although there was room to improve on her behaviour, he had already taught her once, and as long as she paid attention there would be no problem. Well, she often lost her attention around Crow and the others, so it wasn't like he didn't worry at all though.

“Well then, it's time for you two to head out.”

“Yeah. Shall we go, uh... Heath.”

“Yes!”

Even though Crow wasn't acting like his usual self yet, Fii didn't notice in the slightest. It was her usual energetic response.

Conrad was the only one who noticed, and it affirmed once more that things were going to get fun, he thought with a chuckle.

To Conrad, half of the reason behind all this was to test the results of Heath's training. Even though he had taught her all these ways to make herself stylish and cute, there wasn't any chance in her daily life to try them at all. That would have been a waste of his teachings.

But the other half was simply because he took joy in stirring up trouble like this.

(As for dullards, we still have one left. I wanna try with His Highness Roy too.) Thinking this, Conrad began to chuckle again.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 60

Chapter 60

And thus, the two of them left the castle gate and found themselves looking at the town.

The sun was setting and had dyed the sky orange and red, but clouds were still floating above them.

With the town illuminated by the evening sky, the pair simply stared dazedly for a while.

(Speaking of which, it might be my first time being alone with a guy like this. But well, it's just Crow-san.)

Fii had gone shopping a number of times with Gorms and the others, but it was her first time coming to town like this.

For nobles and royalty, even going on a date required them to bring along various guards, she had heard. Apparently the guards and attendants would try their utmost to stay out of sight of the two.

But Fii had never experienced that at all. Fii had only entered high society for a year, merely as an extra to Fiiru. Because she had no experience at all, she didn't fit in with the nobles and always ended up as a wallflower.

And even in those gorgeous parties, with Fiiru, the incredibly beautiful and resplendent star of the party present, who in their right mind would go out of their way to speak to the inferior and presumptuous Fii?

It might have been a tough time for Fii.

She had no prospects for her future nor did she have anything she really wanted to do, so they were just days spent killing time until each party ended.

Due to that, she wondered if, at this rate, she wouldn't be able to find a husband and would instead be forcefully married to some noble in Déman.

But perhaps she had wished for that at the bottom of her heart. She didn't need love. Even a political marriage was fine if her husband would properly look at her. Spending time with someone like that would have been enough.

But well, the point was that Fii had no experience, and although she had happily agreed to help Crow, she really didn't have the faintest clue on what to do.

On the other hand, Crow was worrying about his dress-wearing kouhai too.

(How on earth am I supposed to treat him. He's wearing a dress, but should I just treat him as normal? No, but then this is training, so should I treat him like a woman? But man, he really does look like a girl, huh...)

Crow turned his gaze to the town and gazed Fii's profile as she stood in a daze. Even though she should have been the same as usual, somehow with the evening sky on her cheeks and the red sun reflected in her eyes, she seemed almost magical. When she stood silently like this, she only looked like some girl he didn't know.

Her eyes turned towards Crow.
For a while they stared at each other silently, but,

"Crow-san, can I go buy some soap? I ran out recently,"
she said.

After thinking about dates for a while, that was the answer Fii came to. She had never gone on a date before, nor did she know if this even counted as one. While she was thinking all this, what occurred to her was that she ran out of soap just recently.

Fii had considered borrowing off Doug, but for some reason he hated going to the bathing area with her. Thanks to that, she was borrowing Gorms' as always. Still, even she felt a little guilty about borrowing so much of his. Since she was in town now, it was a good chance.

"Yeah, there's still some time until nightfall. Just use this time to buy whatever you need," replied Crow, scratching his head.

Crow escorted plenty of women around, and making them feel comfortable was supposed to be second nature to him. But for some reason, when it came to Heath in women's clothing, he didn't know what to do.

Well of course. Because Heath wasn't a girl and was just his crossdressing kouhai, he told himself.

For some reason though, he felt relief when Heath spoke instead.

"Yes!"

Fii smiled at Crow's response, and the two of them headed down to town together.

妹

As expected of Orstoll perhaps you could say, because even at this hour, the streets were bustling with people.

Fii ended up knocked over by one of the pedestrians, and she lost her balance.

"Wawah-"

Thanks to the unfamiliar heels, she was going to fall at this rate. Crow supported her with one arm.

"Thank you very much, Crow-san."

"Be careful, geez."

After somehow getting back up with Crow's help, Fii creased her eyebrows.

"These shoes are so hard to walk in. May I take them off?"

"Don't give up so early in your training... Or rather, what are you gunna do if you take them off? Look, just walk a bit behind me. It'll probably make things easier."

With that, Crow held Fii's hand and moved her back. Like that, they began walking a little slower this time.

(Oohh...)

Fii was impressed. Thanks to Crow's large shoulders, all the pedestrians were knocked away instead.

To think that there was a technique like this.

“It’s because you do things like this that girls fall for you, isn’t it. They don’t call you a womaniser for show.”

No sooner had she praised him did a chop rain down on her head.

“Dumbass. I’m doing this for you.”

Crow had decided just to treat her as he usually did. After all, Fii was acting like normal too.

Well, he was a bit worried over whether this would really be any practice though. Still, it wasn’t a bad feeling.

After entering a general goods store in the shopping street, Fii bought three bars of soap.

One of them was a thank you for Gorms.

After that, she noticed some oddly shaped cups. They seemed to be porcelain, but the design was a bit weird. A fifth of the handle tapered upwards. And apparently this cup was selling quite well. There seemed to have been many earlier, but right now only two or three remained.

While she stared at them out of reflex, the shopkeeper called out to her.

“Miss, you’ve got a good eye. This is porcelain from the Kingdom of Karand, and its shape was apparently designed by the Holy Maiden of Light, Fiiru-sama. Allegedly it’s shaped like the hand of God, and prays for peace and prosperity in the world. Truly worthy of the Holy Maiden of Light who brings prosperity to our own country. It’s really popular here too.”

Fii was puzzled at his words.

(Holy Maiden of Light...? Bring prosperity to the country...?)

In Déman, they had believed in the Purase Faith.

It was common in that religion to refer to people like Fiiru, who held mysterious powers, as miko. But there weren’t any teachings about bringing prosperity to the country or anything.

Certainly she had a rare gift and they should be thankful for it, but it wasn’t some power that you could expect too much from. Nor was there any legend like this.

Plus, Orstoll should have followed the Purase Faith as well.

All the things the shopkeeper talked about were actually more in line with the Yunil Faith of the Holy Kingdom of Luciana.

(I guess people's thoughts change between nations.)

Since Fii had never left Déman before this, she wasn't clear on how Orstollians treated religion.

As Fii gazed at the strangely shaped cup, she thought about her younger sister who she hadn't seen in a while.

(I wonder if Fiiru is doing well.)

"Firu-sama hasn't been appearing in events lately, but they say that it's proof that His Majesty has really taken to her! According to the people who have seen her, she is apparently as beautiful and filled with kindness as the rumours say. It makes sense that His Majesty wouldn't want her to appear in public too often. My, how blessed!"

The shopkeeper continued talking by Fii's side.

(I hope she's at least living happily.)

According to Lynette, she was doing fine. She didn't have a very good impression of the King of Orstoll, but she wanted Fiiru to get along with him. After all, it wasn't often a princess could marry for love. She wanted her little sister to be happy.

After thinking about Fiiru for a while, Fii gently put down the cup and left the shop.

"Oh? Are you not going to buy one!? Everybody loves these!"

The shopkeeper called out to stop them, but Fii left the shop with Crow. Crow once again stood in front for her. Really, his name as a pick-up artist wasn't for show.

As she listened to the receding voice of the shopkeeper, Fii thought one thing to herself.

That no matter how you thought about it, that cup looked hard to drink from.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 61

Chapter 61

Following that, Crow-san treated Fii at a crêpe store, and they looked at things in a furniture store. After doing various things, it was night by the time they arrived at their real destination.

Where the two of them had come to was a place filled with expensive stores. Even though the night had blanketed the sky, the glow from the shop windows and oil street lamps made the street seem almost dazzling.

“Wahh...”

Fii couldn't help herself. She was technically a princess who had lived in a palace, so she had lived with lights during the night. But she had never seen such a brightly lit street like this.

Even in Orstoll, the oil street lamps were only present in certain parts of the city. There were none at all in the places that Fii visited with her dorm mates. In other words, this was an expensive street even in this city.

The light coming from the many shop windows lit up the stone-paved roads and well-painted walls as they overlapped upon them, and combined with the light of the street lamps, they created all kinds of patterns. Fii stared on dumbfounded at this new and stunning sight. Seeing her reaction, Crow began to chuckle.

“Is this your first time in a place like this?”

“Yes. My wages as an apprentice knight aren't enough. But you don't come

here often do you, Crow-san?”

“Well, I prefer places that are a bit more relaxed, you see. More importantly, don’t get lost. The public safety is good here, but it’d be annoying if you got lost, okay?”

With that, Crow grabbed her hand again to escort her.
Fii obediently went along with it.

As they walked side by side, they eventually stopped before a certain shop. There were hanging lanterns at its front, and illuminated by their lights was a board with its name on it. In fact, it was a famous store that even Fii had heard of.

“Welcome, guests.”

Upon passing through the door, a polite waiter greeted them.

Fii was feeling a little nervous.
It was hard to relax in high class stores, after all.
Having gotten along with the members from the lower city, their commoner’s nature had ended up seeping into her. Thanks to that, she worried that they would drive her out of the store and clenched harder as her heart pounded. Perhaps understanding her reaction, Crow gave an astounded smile but didn’t stop her squeezing.

“Would you happen to have room for the two of us?”

“Yes. Would a seat with a view of the night sky be acceptable?”

“Yeah, please.”

“Well then, please allow me to show you to your seats.”

Crow pulled her into the shop with its calm atmosphere.
When she first arrived in Orstoll, Fii would never have imagined that she would experience something like this.

(No, even when I was in Déman...)

Although it was just training, and although it was with Crow-san, she would never have imagined coming to a restaurant like this.
Everything was a first experience, and she did feel a little nervous.

It was only after she was shown to a seat with a view of the outside and the waiter left after she took a seat, did she finally stop feeling so self-conscious. Fii let out a sigh of relief.

Crow made a gentle expression and spoke to her.

“Sorry for making you come with me.”

“No, you’ve taken care of me a lot, Crow-san. And also———”

Back to the normal Fii, she opened the menu and licked her lips.

“I’ll get to eat all sorts of yummy food.”

Dinner at a famous and high class restaurant. It was truly something to look forward to.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 62

Chapter 62

(Hmmm, should I go with a filet mignon? The mutton poêlé looks good too. And there are heaps of menu items that I've never seen before. Caviar... It's expensive, but I sure wanna try it. Should I ask Crow-san to buy me some?)

When Fii peeked at the other tables, there were tasty looking dishes all around. Fii looked at her menu, drooling.

Glancing at Crow, he seemed to be glaring seriously at the menu for some reason.

"Hmmm. A hamburg steak...? No, but she said that she liked gratin..."

Fii inclined her head in wonder.
She recalled that Crow liked seafood. She was sure that he had said so during one of their chats.

"Could it be that you're going to try the food that your date likes?"

"Yeah, basically," he answered with a light nod.

Fii closed the menu and smiled at him.

"Then I'll cooperate. Please get me the other dishes that she likes."

If he was going out of the way to try the dishes she liked, then she must have been important to him. In that case, how could Fii not cooperate?

"Are you sure?"

"Yes!"

In the end Fii ordered a hamburg steak and a pie stew, while Crow went with a gratin.

After waiting for a while, the food arrived.

A hamburg steak covered in demi-glace and a fluffy pie stew sat in front of her. As for Crow, it was a gratin with fragrant cooked cheese.

“Wah, it looks yummy!” she claimed with glittering eyes.

Crow smiled.

“Sorry you couldn’t eat what you wanted.”

“Not at all. I love hamburgs and pie stews too!” she answered with a smile.

Seeing this, Crow thought again that she really was just Heath. Any of the girls he’d dated might have sulked about it, or become dejected instead. Some girls would become flat-out angry, while others would hide their emotions with a smile. They had all kinds of reactions. But he could tell that Heath was happy from the bottom of her heart. None of the other girls had ever shown such a reaction.

It was at that point that he suddenly stopped his thoughts and shook his head.

(No, no, to begin with, this kid is a guy, not a girl, so...)

For some reason he just naturally compared her with the other girls. Perhaps because she just looked so natural in this look.

“Crow-san! Can I start eating?”

“Yeah, go ahead.”

With that, Fii picked up her fork and knife and began eating the hamburg steak.

Cutting them into small pieces, she placed them into her mouth.

It was different to the hamburg steaks from the dining hall. This one smelt fantastic. The meat was soft, and each bite would cause the fine sauce to spread through her mouth.

“Yummy~”

As expected of a famous restaurant, perhaps you could say.

She liked eating the hamburgs in the dining hall too, but this hamburger steak was delicious in a different way.

Perhaps she had eaten even finer foods during those parties and gatherings. But this was the first time since she had begun paying attention that she had eaten something so high class. Plus, back as a princess, she had always eaten alone.

Right now she had Crow-san with her.

“Is the sauce, or the flavour of the wine too bitter?” asked Crow as he watched the happily eating Fii.

“No, it’s fine.”

The sauce on the hamburger had the alcohol carefully evaporated out of it, and she couldn’t taste any of its flavour or bitterness.

Once Fii finished her hamburger, she began working on the pie stew. After breaking open the still warm, fluffy pie crust, her fork met with a milky stew.

After she gave it a taste, Crow asked her for her opinion again.

“Are there any capsicums in there?”

“No, not at all?”

“It looks like the carrots are sliced up thinly, so it should be okay.”

“Yes. It’s all been stewed together well, so it’s delicious.”

While Crow asked her about the ingredients in the stew, he went through the stuff in his gratin too.

“Hmm. There are shells in here, so maybe it won’t do...”

It was obvious how much importance Crow was putting on the date just from the way he was carefully examining everything.

But Fii had a small question.

(Isn’t this girl’s tastes a little childish?)

It was mostly children that ordered a hamburger or gratin in an expensive place like this. Usually adults would go for something a bit fancier.

Not just that, but trouble eating capsicums and carrot just sounded rather childish.

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After dinner, they had a walk around the high class shopping district for a little bit before heading back to the castle.

The oil street lamps were now far away, there was only the dim lights from houses and the moon to light their path.

The large castle they were headed too was lit up brightly on the other hand, and from its surroundings it almost looked like stars in the night.

Because it was so dark, in the end Crow continued to escort her. Their two bodies were huddled to each other as they strode down the dark path.

By now, Crow was treating Fii just as normal, with no signs of the silence he had earlier.

They simply headed back together hand-in-hand, as they chatted about things like her life at the dorms.

But as they were happily talking, they stopped when they noticed people up front.

“They’re waiting to ambush us, aren’t they.”

“Seems like it.”

The two of them exchanged words in a whisper.

Right now they were close to one of the more dangerous blocks in the city. Although they hadn’t actually taken a step into it, perhaps the darkness of the night encouraged these thugs to wander a little further.

“Heyy, Mister. On a date with your cute little miss? What a lucky guy.”

“Quite a beauty, ain’t she. I was thinkin’ that I’d have some of your money, but maybe I’ll take her too.”

“That’s how it is, so be good and give us your gold and the girl. If you do, we’ll let you go home in one piece.”

Three nasty looking men were standing in their way. Although Fii was about to transition into a pre-emptive flying kick, Crow held her back in a hug.

“Crow-san!?”

Fii’s eyes widened in a little surprise. Crow just smiled gently in return.

“You stay out of trouble this time. After having this princess accompany me all day, it’d shame my name as a knight to make her fight. Plus, you might trip over if you fight in those heels, yanno.”

Given that she wasn’t used to them yet, it was certainly possible.

(Muu...)

Since she couldn’t help it, Fii obeyed.

“Oh? Ya wanna go three versus one, huh?”

“Acting a little too cool is only gunna give you pain, boy.”

Hearing these ruffians caused Fii to let out an astounded sigh.

(The one in for some pain is you guys...)

It only took an instant for Crow to knock them all out. The men were sprawled on the ground, unmoving.

Since Fii knew how strong he was, it wasn’t at all a surprise. This was the natural result.

Fii didn’t think she could win against him even if she had a sword, to say nothing of these three hooligans...

“I’ve kept you waiting, Princess,”

said Crow, as tried to act cool by giving an impish smile under the moonlight. The thing was one, when Crow did it, he really did seem like a knight out of a fairytale.

“Well done. As a reward, I allow you to continue serving as my escort, Lord Knight,”

she replied. The two of them looked at each other for a moment before

bursting into laughter, holding hands again as they continued making their way.

“Somehow it’s nothing but trouble when it comes to dates with you. At least it wasn’t boring.”

“Was this a date?”

“Nah, I don’t really know. I mean, I was with a guy the whole time,” Crow replied.

“That’s true. It’s not a date with two guys, is it,” said Fii, before giving a teasing smile.

Making their way down the night road, they continued to talk merrily as they headed home.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 63

Chapter 63

Three evenings later, Fii found herself on a rooftop with Conrad.

“Peeking is badd, okay? Crow-san will be so mad if he finds us,” said Fii.

But despite her words, she still lay on the roof in wait, careful to stay invisible from below.

Not only that, she even had the pair of binoculars in her hand. It was something she had received a long time ago from Galluzzi-san.

“But aren’t you curious?” asked Conrad, “It’s the first time he’s ever gone so far for a girl.”

Conrad hadn’t even pretended that he wasn’t peeking, even brought a carpet to lay on.

His hands held a pair of binoculars as well.

Nobody with a conscience was around to stop them.

Actually, there was one person with a conscience.

(Princess Fii! I didn’t teach you the skills of a grass to peek on people like this!)

But although he screamed this in his mind, the situation was still not serious enough for him to appear, and thus the man ended up saying nothing.

When Crow had left the 18th Division’s gathering place, he was wearing the full ceremonial dress for a knight. It was the outfit used for official ceremonies and the like.

A bright blue jacket with gold highlights, and the same coloured pants to match.

His waist even boasted a ceremonial sabre.

This was Crow, who said he hated ceremonial dress.
It was Fii's first time seeing him wearing it.
It would be stranger if she wasn't curious.

So she got on board with Conrad's idea, and thus here they were now, waiting on a roof near the high class shopping district.

"It's taking a while, isn't it?"

"Yeah. How boring."

It was evening now, and Crow had been standing in front of the clocktower the whole time, patiently waiting for his date.

He had hazel eyes and long blonde hair, and in his bright blue ceremonial dress, he attracted the gazes of quite a few passerbys. Young girls in particular would see him by chance, and come to a stop in their daze.

But his date still hadn't arrived yet.
Having staked out for over thirty minutes now, the bored Fii and Conrad had begun using the chalk used for contact purposes to play tic-tac-toe.

The two of them decided that there was no problem since the chalk came off in the rain.

Another twenty minutes later, a horse carriage stopped in front of Crow in the plaza.

Crow began to walk towards it with an unusually gentle smile on his face. His date was definitely riding it.

Fii and Conrad abandoned their 121st match as they raised just their heads to look.

"We're here!"

"So we are."

Now that they weren't drawing on people's rooftops any more, Fii and Conrad began silently observing.

When the door to the carriage opened, Crow's date finally appeared.

Seeing them, the pair suddenly shouted.

“A married womann!?”

“A loliconn!?”

The reason was because it wasn't just one person who appeared. There was a girl who looked about ten, as well as a young woman who seemed to be her mother. Both of them left the carriage together. The two females met eyes with Crow.

(Which is it...!? Or could it be both of them...!?) shouted the peeking duo in their minds.

They then came to a conclusion.

(Either one would be a problem...!)

The little girl went without saying. And as for the young woman, perhaps she was a widower, but if she wasn't, it would be adultery. Adultery!

(W-W-W-, What do we do? We have to stop Crow-san!)

Seeing Crow dressed like the ideal knight, as he strayed from their ideals... As Fii was panicking, a voice called out from behind her.

“What are you two doing.”

“HYAAH!”

The shocked cause Fii to scream in surprise. And when she realised who the voice belonged to, she was greeted with another shock.

“C-, Captain!?”

Turning around, Fii was met with York standing behind her with his arms crossed. His blue-grey eyes were tinged with a little doubt behind his usual mask.

“U-U-Umm, Captain, why are you...!?”

“Since nobody was in the meeting place, I talked to the gate guards. They told me that you three left the castle. After searching for a little, I found you two moving about suspiciously on this rooftop.”

Searching for a little was enough to find them in their hiding spot? Just how good was his vision? Fii felt sweat running down her cheek. And next to Fii, Conrad was trying to sneak away.

“Conrad-san! Please don’t run away by yourself!”

“Ah-, hey, Heath-chan!”

Fii was holding on tightly to his sleeves.

‘We all die together!’ or rather, Fii had not the slightest plan of being scolded by herself. After all, the one who invited her was Conrad-san! Well, the one who asked Galluzzi even earlier for the binoculars was her though.

York simply watched the two, a little astounded.

“What on earth are you two... Mn?”

But his words stopped when he saw Crow far into the background.

“That’s Perciore’s wife and daughter, isn’t it...” he muttered as he looked at the smiling young woman talking to Crow.

“Perciore... you say?” asked Fii.

“A knight in the 5th Division. He was heavily injured during a mission. He was admitted into hospital for treatment. Thankfully it’s nothing permanent and he should be able to work again with rehabilitation, but I heard that his daughter has been depressed.”

Fii looked through her binoculars again and found the little girl with a gloomy expression.

After saying something to the wife, Crow knelt and spoke to the girl.

And then, handing over a plush toy he had been hiding, he gave a knight’s greatest bow.

『Little Princess, your father’s injuries will definitely heal. So please cheer up. Today, I, Crow, shall keep you company instead.』

Even though he was too far to hear, Fii’s ears heard him without a problem. Seeing this knight from out of a fairytale, the girl’s face immediately brightened.

After saying goodbye to Perciore’s wife, he gently took the girl’s hand and

headed towards the restaurant. The wife bowed to Crow as well, before heading towards the hospital.

“I see...”

(So that’s why he wanted to check the restaurant...)

The places that Crow preferred were not dangerous exactly, but definitely not safe from trouble at night.

The well-lit high class shopping street were safe to bring a child to, even at night.

But the stores there were more catered towards adults.

The sauces had wine in them, and they often had flavourings that children weren’t good with. That’s why he wanted to try the food first.

A little princess was being escorted by hand by a knight, as they headed towards a sparkling and gorgeous restaurant.

The girl’s expression was bright as she looked up at the gently speaking Crow.

“Hmmm, it’s a bit different to what I expected.”

Conrad had a complex expression on. It was kind of a let-down to him, but not something bad either.

“Crow-san really is cool.”

As for Fii, her expression was filled with respect for him.

She was once again sure that Crow-san was like the ideal knight. Since he did nothing but pick up women all day, she had gotten a little disappointed in him, but now his impression had shot up again.

“He’s good with sorting these things out. He’s helped me too. By the way, what were you two doing exactly?”

“...” “...”

Once the focus returned to them, they averted their eyes in silence.

“Ah-!”

But by coincidence, Fii noticed a certain thing.

“What is it, what is it?”

And Conrad got on board.

Fii was pointing at a group of roughly 15 hooligans, watching Crow from the shadows.

You would never see their sort in a place like this, so they were particularly out of place.

“Those guys are the ones that picked a fight with us during my training! It’s definitely them!”

Fii spotted the three men from that night.

“Three people weren’t enough against you two, so they went and gathered more?” mused Conrad, “Sounds like something a hooligan would do. Well, what are we going to do?”

Crow would be fine even against those fifteen. He even had a sabre this time, so this group was no match for him. But right now there was the little princess next to him.

It would spoil the princess’ date with her knight.

Would it be fine to let her be frightened? The three of them were knights.

Thus, Fii’s answer was natural.

“The three of us will take care of them!”

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The thugs had gathered their buddies for revenge, before searching for the target.

It was some pretty boy with long hair.

It didn’t take long to find him. They were scared when they saw him in his knight’s outfit, but it wasn’t a problem.

After all, there were fifteen of them.

They found an alleyway nearby to hide in, and waited for their revenge. Although they stood out quite a bit, none of that mattered as long as the guy himself didn’t see.

He ended up bringing a little girl along, but that was convenient too. As long as they could hold her hostage, they had as good as won.

“When are we doing it?”

“Soon. I’ll give the signal, and we’ll do it.”

Once that guy passed by their alleyway, all fifteen of them would rush him at once.

With their numbers he’d have the shit beaten out of him no matter how strong he was.

“He he he, I dunno if you’re a knight or whatever, but I’ll teach you to regret going against I, the great Kidda-sama.”

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“My. Who’s going to be regretting, exactly?”

“What a funny thing to say.”

“None of you lot look strong enough to deal with a knight.”

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Three people suddenly jumped down from the rooftops. One was a peerless, enchanting beauty. One was a tiny boy dressed as an apprentice knight. One was a masked man dressed as a knight. The three of them were standing around their group in some kind of encirclement.

“W-, Who the fuck are you guys!” shouted Gidda in agitation.

“We’re from the 5th Knight Division,” began the man.

“Boorish guys who interrupted dates,” continued the woman.

“Will all be eliminated by us!” finished the boy.

Since the 18th Division wasn’t exactly official, they just used some other name. York’s expression was even as usual, but Fii and Conrad were grinning daringly.

“K-Knight Division!?”

“Even if they’re telling the truth, it’s only three people! Get em!”

“Only the guy looks any strong. After we beat the shit out of him, it’s over.”

At Gidda’s signal, all of them rushed at York together.

It only took one swing of York's sheathed sword. Five grown men tumbled to the ground.

The hooligans began to fear.

"T-, This guy... Strong..."

"We gotta run!"

"Get the woman! Take out the woman!"

The men began running towards the side they thought was easiest. But the woman was nowhere to be seen.

"Eh? She's gone?"

"Where'd she go?"

By the time they said that, Conrad was already behind them.

Conrad reached out and grabbed one of the unsuspecting men. With his slender arms, it looked like a joke when he lifted the man up, and smacked him along with two others towards a wall. Not content to stop there, his two arms curved like snakes to constrict around two other necks and stole their consciousness in an instant. Seeing that, three other men tried to run away, but Conrad promptly dispatched them with a knife hand, a punch, and a palm strike. In just a moment, another eight men were lying on the ground.

It was only Gidda and one other left.

"Hii...! M-Monster!"

"The brat! We can break past the brat!"

Fii pulled out some kind of rope. At its centre it split into three, each one with some kind of heavy rubber ball attached. It was a throwing weapon known as bolas.

When Fii noticed the men running towards her, she began swinging the bolas above her head. Even the feeble Fii could grant them incredible kinetic energy by doing this.

And once they were powerful enough, she released them towards their legs.

The three-pronged weight rope spread in midair and wrapped tightly, depriving the thugs of their movements.

“Iii!?”

“Uwah!”

The ropes wrapped around them, the weights smacked into their bodies, and the thugs ended up falling to the ground.

And like a boxer countering an incoming straight, as the men fell towards her...

“EI!”

She exploded into a merciless kick to the face. Falling to the ground with the whites of his eyes showing, was the leader of these thugs.

After that, the three of them handed the thugs to the knights.

Crow’s date with the girl ended without incident, and apparently the girl had cheered up.

Apparently Perciore was giving his best in rehabilitation as well, so that he could make a comeback as a knight.

Finally———

“I’m so hungry. This is your fault, Conrad-san.”

“I’m hungry too. But it’s not good to blame others for your problems.”

Fii and Conrad had their food taken as punishment.

Watching over Crow’s date had just barely been acceptable, but graffitiing on people’s rooftops was a no go. Well, that really should have been obvious though.

Since sweets and tea were forbidden as well, for a while, the two of them simply spent the time in the gathering place, slouching over a table.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 67

Chapter 67 – The Captain's Bad Points

Ever since Fii entered the Knight Order, she would report to York once a month. By now, it had become something of a routine.

Even though York was incredibly busy, always rushing here and there, he never failed to make time for Heath. Each time he would listen to her, give her advice, and praise her.

"Captain, this guy from the Eastern Dormitory called Doug transferred in. We've gotten really close!"

"Aah, Kaiser-sensei's disciple, huh. I've heard the rumours. It seems he has a lot of promise as a swordsman."

"Yes. He really looks up to you, and says he wants to meet you one day."

"Hmm. Is that so. Maybe I'll try meeting him if I can find the time."

"Yes, Doug would be very happy!"

The two of them often met in the gathering place, but today they were chatting in a rear garden.

And today, Fii felt a gaze.

Looking to her right, she found a maid about her age, looking over hesitantly. Fii noticed where that gaze was pointed at.

It would be more accurate to say that the maid was looking at York. Since Fii's gaze met her by accident, she flashed her a smile.

When the maid saw this, she timidly approached them.

In her hands were some wrapped cookies. Probably home-made.

And her eyes looked at York with some love.

“Umm, York-sama... I made some cookies. If it’s fine with you, please have some!” she exclaimed with her eyes closed, before holding them out with two hands.

Fii watched it all in admiration.

(The Captain really is popular. He’s cool, and strong, and just an amazing person. Of course he’s popular! Crow-san is popular too. I guess knights really are popular. Hu hu hu, one day I’ll be too.)

Fii sat there, imagining herself surrounded by maids offering their cookies to her.

The maid girl stood there looking downwards with flushed cheeks. She was probably too embarrassed to look at him.

Fii watched on warmly.

“No need.”

But York’s cold words were like cold water poured onto the girl.

“Eh-, Captain...?”

The maid looked up too and saw his face. She froze and grew pale, before tears gathered in her eyes.

Although she was on the verge of crying, she still spoke with a trembling voice.

“Umm... Do you dislike cookies...? I’m sorry. N-, Next time I’ll bring something else.”

“No need, I said. No matter what you make, I will not eat it, nor will I ever eat it. It’s a waste of time.”

York’s words were like ice as he looked down at her with a cold expression. The maid stood dazedly.

“I’m sorry...!”

And eventually she began to truly cry, turning around and running away. York simply stopped looking at the running maid, as though nothing had even

happened.

“C-, Captain!”

With a blanched face, Fii’s gaze darted between the girl and her captain.

“What’s the matter, Heath?”

“What do you mean, what’s the matter! What you said was so cruel!”

Hearing her objections, York’s eyes furrowed.

“If I didn’t go that far, she would have come again. Paying attention to these things is a waste of time. Even talking is a waste of time. I try and cut down time on those things as much as possible. I’m busy, after all.”

“How can you call it a waste of time! She went out of her way to make you those cookies!”

“I don’t ever recall asking for that. And it’s true that I would never eat them. It’s for her sake too, that I make things clear,” he declared with folded arms.

This time it was Fii’s brows that furrowed. She looked towards the maid who was almost out of sight, before running off towards her.

From behind, she heard York call out in a little panic.

“Heath, where are you going! You still haven’t finished reporting what happened this month!”

Turning to look at him just once, she shouted,

“Comforting a crying girl is obviously more important! Captain, you idiot!”

With that, Fii continued chasing after the maid, leaving York behind. York simply stood there in a daze, watching her leave with eyes wide from shock.

“I’m... an idiot...?”

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 68

Chapter 68

While Fii chased after the running maid girl, the other maids gossiped.

"What a silly girl. This is why none of the other maids ever approach York-sama."

"Yeah, even though the rest of us can only watch him from afar. Serves her right."

"She's a newcomer so I guess she didn't know. I don't know if he saved her in the past or whatever, but this is what happens when you try and steal a march on others."

As Fii was passing by, she ran over to the maids. Placing her left hand on her hip and looking a little angry, she leant in and poked the maid on the nose.

"You girls, it's not good to talk bad about people like that, you know."

"H-, Heath-kun!?"

The maids all looked at her in shock.
A few maids were even a little flushed.

"Anyway, do you know where she went? I lost sight of her."

"Ummm.... She went that way, but..."

"Thanks! I'll see you later!"

Flashing the maids a smile, Fii ran off with a wave.

"T-, The smile of an angel..."

“So cute...”

The maids stood in a daze as they watched Fii disappear.

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After running for a while in the direction the maids indicated, Fii finally found her. The girl was crying as she hugged her knees in the shade of a tree.

Fii down next to her.

“Are you okay? Sorry. Captain said some cruel things.”

“Heath-kun!?”

The girl seemed to have been crying quite a bit. She hadn’t even noticed Fii arrive, so there was shock all over her face. While wiping her tears, the maid girl spoke.

“No, it was my fault. I didn’t think about York-sama’s feelings. I got in the way of your conversation too. Of course he’d hate me.”

“I don’t think that’s quite right...” muttered Fii.

Still, she pulled out a handkerchief from her pocket and wiped the girl’s tears.

“You shouldn’t rub like that. Your eyes will go red.”

“Y-, Yes. I’m sorry. But is it okay for you to be here? You were speaking with York-sama.”

Her words caused Fii to remember what happened. It made Fii feel a little down.

“Speaking of which, I went and called him an idiot...”

“I’m so sorry! It’s my fault!”

“No, it wasn’t. I said it because I wanted to.”

“But...”

The maid girl looked on the verge of tears again. Even the fight with York and Fii was brought up.

(I came here to comfort her, but it's not going too well, is it.) "Hmmm..."

After thinking for a while, Fii turned the girl's chin with her index finger, and then peered straight into her eyes.

"Tears really don't suit you. What I want to see is your smile. So please stop crying."

"Eh-..."

The girl suddenly froze with wide-open eyes.
And since Fii didn't know what to say next, she froze as well.
The atmosphere became a little weird.

Folding her arms, Fii tilted her head in wonder.

"That's weird. I did it just like Crow-san, but it didn't go too well."

"Y-, You were copying Crow-sama...?"

"Yeah. He told me to say those things to a girl."

"I don't really think it suits you, Heath-kun..."

"I seee. But you stopped crying, so I guess it all worked out."

"Ah-..."

With that, the girl noticed that her tears had stopped at some point.
Although it was surprise that stopped her crying, somehow all the sadness from before seemed a little fainter now.

"Well, anyway, I want you to cheer up. That's all I wanted to say."

The maid nodded at the brightly smiling Fii.

"Thanks, Heath-kun."

Although her eyes were still a little red, the maid girl smiled back.
While the two of them smiled at each other, a sudden grumbling sound interrupted.

It was the sound of Fii's stomach.

It was Fii's turn to turn a little red, as she held her stomach, embarrassed.

"Uuu, how embarrassing. We had such a good atmosphere going too."

The maid girl chuckled at her, and presented the cookies she was still holding.

“If you’d like, please eat these.”

“Can I?”

“Mn. There’s nobody to give them to now, and I’d be happy if you ate them instead.”

“I see. Then I’ll help myself!”

Fii took them into her hands with a smile.
And then she promptly opened the bag and opened wide.

“Mn! It’s really good!”

She could smell the fragrant butter, and the cookies had been baked perfectly crispy. Although Fii felt that it was lacking a little sweetness, that gave it a refined taste instead.

A natural smile surfaced on her face.

“...”

It was a smile that caused the girl to stare a little.

“Althea! Where are you!”

“I’m sorry for being mean! We should have warned you properly!”

“Please come out!”

Suddenly, they could hear voices from around the corner. In the direction where Fii came from. The voices belonged to the maids from before.
Their cries were tinted heavily with apology and worry for the girl they were looking for.

“Ah-, it’s my senpais,” reacted the maid girl.

She didn’t seem to be unhappy about it.
Although the maids probably bickered and argued with each other, it definitely wasn’t everything.

“I guess they’ve come to apologise. So your name was Althea?”

“Ah-, yes.”

“It looks like things are alright now. I’m going to go.”

Fii stood up and dusted off her pants, before running off somewhere again. Though, mid-run, she turned and flashed another smile, as she waved goodbye to Althea.

“See you later, Althea!”

“Ah-... Thank you...”

But Fii’s actions were prompt, and she had disappeared before Althea could get the words out.

“Altheaa! There you were!”

“What’s wrong?”

妹

“Heath-kun...”

When her senpais discovered her, Althea was still staring dazedly, in the direction that Fii had disappeared in.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 69

Chapter 69

Crow was training some young knights. Although he couldn't be considered a veteran, perhaps because of his sociable personality, he was often left with these sort of tasks.

"Please take care of me!" challenged a knight, before rushing at Crow with his sword.

Although the knight had slashed downwards with all his power, Crow easily evaded it. Taking the knight's flank, Crow lightly tapped his sword to the knight's neck with minimal movement.

"Don't put so much strength into one hit. It'll affect your balance, and present an opening to your enemy."

"Y-, Yes!"

Because of what had happened, the knight nodded as he broke out in a cold sweat.

"Next."

"Yes, please take care of me!"

The next knight attacked a few times, but each one was easily parried. And then, when the knight transitioned into a side sweep, his blade was intercepted and the sword flew out of his hands.

"You aren't composed enough when you strike, and don't pay attention to your grip. Just because your strikes don't hit, doesn't mean you should panic."

“Yes...”

After that, a few other knights fought with him, but none of them could get a strike on Crow.

Although the young knights had been shocked when they heard they would be training with real swords, considering the difference in strength Crow just displayed, it made sense to them now.

Between his frivolous attitude and all his talks about women, he was more like a close senpai than a respected one. But once he displayed his strength, that impression changed completely.

Thanks to that, Crow won new respect amongst these young knights today, but the man himself was more worried about the gaze he had been feeling.

The young knights hadn't noticed, but for a long while now, somebody had been staring at Crow from behind. Their gaze was coming from a thick tree behind the training place.

“Well then, think about what I pointed out just now and practice by yourselves.”

“Yes!”

After giving the knights their instructions, Crow began walking towards that tree.

“What on earth are you doing, Heath...?”

When he looked up from its base, he found that Heath was lying on a thick branch like a cat. Her brows were creased into a frown.

Although Fii had thought about going back to the meeting place, she felt too awkward to do so. So since she heard about Crow training people, she ended up coming here instead.

“I called Captain an idiot...”

“Hahh, and why'd you do that...?”

Crow scratched his head in confusion at Fii's moody words.

Fii told him what had happened.

“I see.”

“Is the Captain always like that with girls? Did something happen?”

Since Crow was the closest to the Captain, she decided to try asking why he treated girls that way.

“So even you’ve come to ask me that... When he was fourteen, the daughter of a count from the neighbouring country———” he began with a serious expression, “———did nothing to him. That guy’s just always been like that... When he was seven he went to a party. There was a princess from a neighbouring country that fell for him at first sight, and after completely ignoring her all night, she left bawling. It almost caused an international dispute. All I can say is that he was born like that...”

Nothing happened.

Although Crow mixed a joke into it, he actually seemed a little sad about it. Even though York was his good friend, even Crow could only feel that this part of him was a ridiculous problem.

“I see...”

If he was just like that, then there was nothing they could do.
Fii could only nod.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 70

Chapter 70

"I'm sorry, Heath."

When Fii came back, she found York bowing to her.

The suddenness of it all caused her to panic.

"I-, I'm the one who should be saying sorry! I called you an idiot, Captain," she cried as she shook her head.

York's expression was serious.

"Then, you'll forgive me?"

"Yes! Of course!"

She had been worried that things would be awkward between them, but who would have expected that York would apologise to her.

Feeling relieved, she thought to herself again that the Captain really was magnanimous.

Fii's mood was great now, having reconciled faster than expected.

"Then from now on you'll treat girls more nicely, right?"

"Huh? Why would I?"

His expression told that he truly had no idea what she was talking about. Fii began to sweat.

"C-, Captain, wasn't your sorry an apology...?"

"Umu. I upset you, after all. I'm quite sure my attitude offended you somehow.

I'm quite thankful for the good relationship we have. That's why I decided to apologise first. But it looks like you've forgiven me. Thank goodness."

Fii could feel a deep sense of despair welling inside.

(This guy... is totally hopeless... He didn't reflect at all...!) She finally realised it. York was simply apologising.

It wasn't that he realised he had done something bad; he simply wanted to continue his relationship with Fii, so he decided to say sorry.

It was terrible.

She needed to have a word with him.

"Captain... The reason I was angry is because you said something cruel to a girl!"

"Something cruel?"

"Didn't you make that maid girl cry?"

"But it was necessary."

"Even if it was necessary, couldn't you have said it in a nicer way?"

"No, I am quite certain that was the best way. There's proof. After saying it like that, I suspect she will never approach me again."

Fii's mouth hung open in shock.

"Y-, You don't think at all that you should be gentler with girls!?"

"Why. Even if I do that, it won't help get any jobs done. In fact, by saying it the way I did, I improved efficiency by reducing downtime."

"If you keep doing things like that, one day a girl is going to make you suffer, you know?"

"You mean if the women stage a rebellion? Bring it on. When they come, I'll show them just how I suppress them!"

Even though Fii thought they had been talking about how he needed to be gentler to girls, for some reason she could see a weird aura around York, and the sound of excited rumbling.

Why. Why did it turn into such a weird conversation...

Fii was at her wits' end.

But, she understood the gist of things. In other words, being kind to women wouldn't help his job, so he wouldn't do it. In fact, they got in the way when they approached so he wanted them to stay away.

"Captain..."

Fii hung her head a little sadly.

"Captain, if I was useless to you, would you not treat me kindly like this...?"

'I don't want him to nod...'

Those words passed through her heart.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 71

Chapter 71

'If I were useless to you, would you treat me coldly?'

Fii waited for his answer.

Her heart pounded as her chest clenched.

(I'd hate it if he said yes...)

Even though she was the one who asked, those were her feelings right now.

"Hmmm... Well..."

York held his chin in his hands and began to think.

After about thirty seconds, he turned to Fii and spoke.

"Even if you ask me that, the person we're talking about is somebody incredibly talented even for a knight. Somebody who constantly strives to overcome their weaknesses, and endeavours not just for my sake, but for everyone's. You. You help the lighten mood in our division as well, and I also feel comfortable when I'm around you. You're a valuable person who there isn't a replacement for. So trying to imagine a you that isn't any of those things just isn't possible for me. That's why I don't know what to tell you."

His words caused her cheeks to suddenly heat up.

She even had to desperately stop herself from grinning.

"D-, Don't think you can avoid the question by praising me, okay!"

In order to hide it, Fii tried to seem angry.

“I-, I see. Sorry.”

Why was she angry.

His expression betrayed his total lack of understanding.

Truly the ultimate dullard.

After thinking for a while, he muttered “Ah,” in realisation.

“But that doesn’t mean that I’d abandon knights that stop working because of injury, you know. They’re the heroes of our nation. I would never treat them with anything but welcome. I don’t want you to get injured, and I intend on taking care to keep you that way, so you can rest assured.”

“That’s really not what I meant... Geez...”

With her face still beet red, Fii slumped her shoulders and let out a tired sigh. All her fervour had disappeared somehow.

In the end, it was no good...

As long as York himself didn’t think it was important to treat girls well, they would never really solve this.

Still, as his loyal subordinate, she felt it was necessary to advise him.

“Then, as your subordinate, I’d like to ask a favour of you. Please treat girls as gently as you can.”

Upon hearing her words, York fell into thought for a moment. His folded arms trembled, and his brows twitched, but he managed to squeeze out an answer.

“I-, I’ll see...”

Even Fii was resigned at this point.

(Does he really hate spending time on women that much...?)

Just imagining it had caused York to tremble painfully.

Well, it was true that the Captain was very busy, and she also felt sorry for him in this respect. But Fii felt that it would be a problem in all sorts of ways if it continued.

Even if it didn’t affect his duties as a knight, it would be all sorts of problems once he got married.

(But I think that the Captain might change once he finds a girl he wants to be gentle to. It's such a shame... I think even the Captain would change if he met a wonderful girl like Fiiru...)

Unfortunately, Fiiru was married.
Getting into an affair with His Majesty's wife would probably be bad news even for the Captain.

Since Fii couldn't think of any other way of changing him, she was forced to put it aside for now.
But she swore in her mind. That if one day there was a wonderful girl who could change him, at that time, Fii would take action again.

<https://tamakeribanchou.wordpress.com/2016/06/14/royyork-sketch/>

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 72

Chapter 72 – Kain-san 2

Kain was troubled...

Well, rather, he had been troubled for a long time now, but now another new trouble was added to that mountain.

Kain's gaze was directed at Princess Fii, who was leaving the 18th Division gathering place.

Kain immediately began to move.

While suppressing his presence, he relocated to the usual location.

"Kain-saaan! I've come to play~!"

No sooner had Princess Fii stopped before a certain tree did she immediately move to climb it.

Before she could, Kain leapt down from his tree. A clean, silent landing.

The moment Princess Fii saw him, her face spread into a smile.

"Kain-san, I've come to play!"

'Didn't you just say that?'

Kain didn't say that though.

He had something more important to say.

"Heath-kun, didn't I tell you not to climb trees? It's dangerous."

"Yes, but I climb walls all the time, so it's a bit late for that, you know?"

Her words seemed to stab into him.

True. She climbed walls all the time.

It was his fault for teaching her the grass skill of wall-scaling. Naturally, it was even more dangerous than climbing a tree. Kain had even taught her various other things, like rolling to break one's fall. It had long passed the point where he could warn her about the dangers of tree-climbing.

"True, but there's no harm in being careful."

"Yes, I'll climb carefully."

He actually meant that she shouldn't climb at all... Kain placed his hand to his forehead.

"More importantly, Kain-san, I came to play! Please teach me a new skill!"

Her words caused sweat to flow down his back again. This was what had been troubling him. Princess Fii who he had become acquainted with. Just like what she was doing now, Princess Fii would frequently come find him to 'play'.

But that wasn't the problem. Well, it was, but there was a bigger one. The real problem was what her 'playing' entailed.

Each time Princess Fii came here, she came to learn his skills.

"Heath-kun, the skills of a grass aren't a game..."

"Ah, yes, that's true. I'm sorry! I'll take the lessons seriously!"

(No... That's not what I mean... If possible, I don't want you to learn at all.) For some reason his warning had been met with an enthusiastic reply. Kain didn't know what to do any more.

She was technically a VIP. If possible, he wanted her to have nothing to do with danger.

People often said that trouble would mysteriously find those who possessed dangerous skills.

Perhaps it was mere superstition. Those who needed to learn these skills were doing dangerous things to begin with.

Even so, normally she should have been living peacefully and elegantly, surrounded by maids and guards. When he thought about how he was teaching

these kinds of skills to her, he simply couldn't stop the anxiety. If possible, he really didn't want to teach them to her...

But this girl would always come here to learn them, like visiting her favourite restaurant on a Sunday.

Thanks to that, most of his grass skills had been passed on to Her Highness the Second Queen.

And the safer, just barely skills were something he was all out of. By this point, all he had left were aggressive grass combat techniques and the skills for hidden weapons.

Those were definitely impossible to teach her, he thought.

"Kain-san, what will today's technique be?"

But Princess Fii's eyes were sparkling as she happily awaited her lesson. She seemed to have no doubts at all that he would agree.

And as long as His Majesty's orders were still valid, Kain had no choice but to teach her.

(I am a grass... To protect the nation, I carry out His Majesty's commands to the letter...

Mum, Dad... Is this really necessary...?)

His parents didn't reply. They had always been silent people.

Kain stopped reminiscing about his parents and forced himself to face reality. At any rate, it was a fact that he had to teach her. Therefore, he hoped for something as safe as possible.

What should he do...

At that moment, a certain idea came to mind.

"Heath-kun, what kind of technique do you want to learn?"

It didn't see much use with grass, but it was a trading technique to probe the other's desires first.

Going by their previous interactions, Kain would list some safe skill, and Princess Fii would reject him. Kain would compromise and name something else, but Princess Fii would shake her head again. Most of the time, he would

eventually teach her something dangerous.

But if he asked her what she wanted first, then at least there wouldn't be increasingly dangerous proposals.

Perhaps he could even persuade her towards safety.

Even if her suggestion was a little dangerous, he could just modify it a little to make it safer.

Kain nodded, impressed with his own idea.

If Princess Fii asked for a non-grass skill, that would be even better. He had no problem with teaching her the skills of a regular soldier.

"Hmmm..."

Placing a finger against her lips, Princess Fii thought for a while.

And then, turning towards Kain with a brilliant smile, she spoke.

"I want to learn assassination techniques!"

"GUHUUH-!"

Fii's bombshell struck Kain without mercy.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 73

Chapter 73

It happened on a day a little while after Doug and Fii started getting along. When Fii headed to a break area, she discovered that a lot of boys were gathering around some piece of paper, kicking up some kind of fuss. Even Gorms, Slad and Remié were there.

They seemed to be having a lot of fun.

"Whatcha looking at? Show me too!"

So Fii came over as well.

"Mn? It has nothing to do with you, Heath."

"Yep, yep. There's not much meaning even if you get involved Heath."

"Yeah, I think it would be better if you ignored this, Heath."

However, their attitudes were awfully cold. Or rather than cold, dismissive, perhaps.

Being the only one excluded made Fii frown and puff up her cheeks.

"What the heck! Why am I the only one excluded!"

She jumped up and pinched Gorms' cheek.

"Owowow, what the heck did I do!"

"Shut up! The moment you tried leaving me out, you were guilty of the same crime!"

"Alright, alright already! If you wanna see, then see!"

The apprentice knights hurriedly handed a piece of paper to the kicking and screaming Fii.

Fii took it into her hands and had a look.

It was a list of everyone in the Northern Dormitory, as well as a bunch of numbers next to their names. And at the top, a certain title was visible.

“Man... liness... rankings...?” she asked in confusion.

“The Manliness Rankings,” corrected another apprentice knight.

“It’s a ranking to decide who the manliest of all is in the Northern Dormitory.”

“The person who takes first place is the one who wins.”

“That’s why it doesn’t have much to do with you Heath.”

Fii suddenly felt very offended.

Manliness? Of course she had that!

Thumping her chest, she declared,

“As wide as this nation may be, there are few knights as manly as I am, you know. At the top are Captain York, Palwick-san, and then probably me, okay!”

“Eh...?”

“Uh...”

“No way, dude...”

It was so exaggerated that nobody knew how to respond.

Even Fii thought that perhaps she boasted just a little much. The anger from being left out had gotten her excited.

Still, she hadn’t thought that she had been too far off the mark. After all, all the maids had been kicking a fuss over her recently.

Fii had absolute confidence that she had manliness in her too.

“Anyway, I’m joining in. I’ll show you just how many I am!”

“You sure? The person who gets last is gunna get a punishment game.”

“By the way, I’ve been last every time so far...” added Remié.

His shoulders were drooped, and his eyes were a bit wet.

Because of his gentle personality and rather cute appearance, it couldn't be helped that he was low in rankings like this.

Even Fii was confident that she could beat Remié.

“No problem. After all, it's impossible for me to lose to Remie! I'll join! Far from losing, I'm aiming for top place!”

“So mean...!”

Ignoring the shocked Remié, the apprentice who had explained the game to Fii suddenly crossed his arms in a manly way, and then declared in a deep and manly voice, “Alright, got it! Heath will also be participating in the Northern Dormitory's Fourth Manliness Ranking. Is everyone fine with that?”

“Yeah!”

“No probs!”

“Sounds good!”

Each apprentice knight bellowed their response as they posed in a manly fashion, and thus, Fii's participation in the Northern Dormitory Manliness Rankings was settled.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 74

Chapter 74

TLN: Happy birthday, Lala!

"Alright. There are the rules."

Apparently even this Manliness Rankings competition had some rules. Fii took a seat and listened carefully.

"The period for the competition is roughly a month. First, every participant starts with 500 points. During the month, you distribute those 500 points to people who you are manly. The person who ends up with the most points is the one who is accepted as the manliest man."

"I see~"

The rules were simple and clear. In other words, you competed in manliness while getting others to acknowledge it.

The boy who explained things handed Fii some new paper. It was different to the rankings paper from before.

Neat lines were drawn along the page, and there were two columns for names, and one for reasons, as well as various other details.

"Use this paper when you want to hand points over. You don't have to write the reason, but it's better to."

"Why?"

"Because handing over points is also manly. That's why if you give a manly

reason, you can instead get manliness points from others.”

(I see!)

Fii was impressed. So handing over points was a strategy as well. She asked the boy a question.

“Can you give yourself points?”

In that case, it would be entirely easy to avoid the punishment game.

“It isn’t against the rules. But it’s not a manly thing to do. You’ll stop getting points from the others. It would become impossible to aim for the top.”

“A guy who gives himself points because he’s afraid of a punishment isn’t manly at all.”

“A guy who gives points to someone else even though there’s a risk of the punishment game is what real manliness is about.”

“I seee.”

The two boys around her seemed to be boasting of their own manliness. To be honest, Fii thought that the rules were full of holes, but to these manly boys, it was apparently not a problem.

“Also, you can transfer the points you’ve gotten to someone else.”

“Transfer? Is there really anyone who would do that?”

Fii couldn’t think of any benefits at all.

“No, transferring your points to someone else is pretty manly too. Even if it drops your rankings this time, you can expect your rankings to rise next round.”

“Transferring all your points to someone else, and waiting for the next round at the bottom. It’s pretty damned manly!”

“I see...”

(It sounds like a plain idiot to me...)

It sounded like a valid strategy to the boys.

“But nobody has ever done it, so I’ve been last every time...”

Unfortunately, Remié stated the reality.

In the end, it was just an interesting idea, and nobody had ever done it.

“Whoa, whoa, contenting yourself with being last three times in a row is pretty manly too, yanno. I’ll give you ten points.”

“Mn. I’m impressed that you haven’t tried protecting yourself after three times in despair. I’ll give you ten points as well.”

With that, a number of boys wrote the lamenting Remié’s name on the Fourth Round paper.

“T-, Thank youuu...” he said with moist eyes.

Perhaps he would finally be able to escape last place...

“By the way, Zerius has been 1st, three times in a row.”

“Right now everyone is saying that he’s got the best chance of winning the Fourth Round too.”

Zerius was often the topic of the maids’ discussions, but right now he wasn’t in the break room.

“That guy is seriously manly, after all.”

Another apprentice knight folded his arms as he nodded to himself in thought.

“Yeah. Even I have to acknowledge his manliness.”

This time it was Gorms’ turn to fold his arms, and nod with a difficult expression.

“Even the way he drinks milk is manly. I was freaking shocked...”

“He’s the only one I think is impossible to beat.”

“He’s probably always gunna be 1st, so people have been saying that they’re aiming for 2nd instead.”

“He’s like the embodiment of manliness.”

The boys all praised Zerius one by one.

Fii looked at the name sitting magnificently at first place.

Zerius, who Fii knew as well, was apparently the absolute king of the manliness rankings.

But well, even Fii could assent. That was simply how manly the boy named Zerius was.

He would definitely become a hindrance on Fii's path to the top.

Looking at the rest of the names, she found that Gorms was pretty high up at 5th place, as was Gheith who was at 6th. Slad was decent as well, at 12th place. And Fii suddenly spotted Doug's ranking too.

"Doug..."

The moment she called out this name, a boy began trembling behind her.

"Why did you join in without telling me?"

On the Round Three ranking sheet, Doug's name was clearly there. It was around 22nd place.

The reason people voted for him were things like

"He's got some dumb parts to him, but he's manly."

"When he gets bossed around by Fii, he reminds me of my dad."

"He's strong."

Even though he joined the Northern Dormitory after Fii did, he had the gall to participate before she did.

And not only that, he kept it a secret from her.

The dark-skinned boy was glared at by the small one— — —who was a girl inside— — —and blurted out in panic, "N-, No, I mean... I thought it wouldn't have much to do you with... I mean you're..."

She stopped him from blurting out her secret with a glare.

Naturally, Doug saw Fii as a girl. How could he have imagined that she would want to participate.

But Fii didn't understand his thoughts.

Fii glared viciously at Doug.

"I'll punish you later."

A decisive declaration.

"Yes..."

Doug simply dropped his shoulders and hung his head.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 75

Chapter 75 (& reply to midoriha)

That evening, the apprentice knights invited Fii to come along as they left the castle.

"Sure. Sounds good," she answered with a smile, before going to invite Doug as well.

"Doug, let's go~"

"Yes."

Fii beckoned with her hand, and Doug trotted along from behind. Everyone was already used to the sight. That's why nobody even commented. In fact, when they wanted to invite either of them, it was already natural to ask Fii for permission instead.

The meeting place was the northern castle gate. When she arrived, Fii spotted some familiar faces.

Gorms, Slad, and Remié were there too. Gheith had injured his leg recently which was why he wasn't going out too often.

"Looks like we're all here."

Altogether, it was a huge group of eleven.

"Well then, shall we go?" prompted Slad.

At that moment, a band of knights passed through the gate. Crow and Orbull were amongst them.

“Are you guys heading for town?”

“Yes!”

“We’re heading to Lowtown!”

Since Crow asked so amiably, the apprentice knights replied happily. Crow was just well-known. He was originally an apprentice knight, so before he entered the 18th Division, he had been making waves in the 1st. He still helped out in various places, so pretty much everyone in the order knew him.

Since their senpais knew Crow, naturally the apprentice knights would get chances to speak to him too.

Not only that, but Fii was in the Northern Dorm. Since Crow often came to speak to Fii, the other apprentices spoke to him too.

“Come back before it gets too late. Also, please look after our Heath! Take care that he doesn’t get lost somewhere.”

“Please don’t speak like I’m a little kid.”

Fii glared at him with narrowed eyes for treating her like some kid that was tagging along.

As for Doug who was standing next to her, he looked excited and happy to see Crow.

York was the knight he admired the most, but apparently he admired Crow too.

(What a fickle bastard...) thought Fii.

But Crow was the idol of pretty much all the apprentice knights, so all the boys were happy as well.

He had the one flaw of being a playboy, but he was strong and talented, his looks were good, his personality was great, and he was good at looking after others too. It would be stranger if they didn’t admire him.

And also, even though Crow’s talks about women made them blush, the boys all listened attentively.

To the boys, being a playboy wasn’t a bad thing perhaps, Fii mused.

After talking a little to the other knights too, Fii’s group finally decided to head

out.

“See ya then.”

Crow and the knights smiled as they watched their kouhai head off, so the apprentices waved goodbye.

Orbull wrote “Have fun.” on his signboard too.

“Kuh! Crow-san really is so cool,” exclaimed Slad, still thinking about the encounter.

Doug’s tanned cheeks flushed a little red, and he nodded along as well. Since they were all closer now they knew, but Doug was a taciturn type. He would talk when it counted———for example, when he first entered the Northern Dorm———but otherwise he would usually just listen and give small comments.

Apparently he was the type who couldn’t speak unless he planned out what to say in advance.

But even though he didn’t talk much, his face did all his talking for him. Since you could immediately tell what he was thinking, he never had trouble communicating.

Nobody was sure whether that was a good or bad thing for Doug though.

“I wanna get strong and popular like Crow-san too.”

“It’s impossible for you.”

The boys all began to talk about Crow.

“I wanna be strong like Orbull-san,” said Gorms alone.

“Oh? So you admire Orbull-san then,” commented Fii.

Everyone had lots of knights that they admired, but Fii loved Orbull too, so her ears had perked up.

“Yeah. He’s amazing. In terms of power, he’s probably without equal. But despite that, he’s fast too, and he has good technique. He’s great with using all kinds of equipment, so if I had to follow in someone’s footsteps, it’s his.”

Admittedly, Gorms’ figure was similar to Orbull’s. Although, Orbull was still a size bigger, Gorms had the face of a villain, and Orbull-san’s face was visibly kind.

Everyone had their own goals and idols.

Fii's was the Captain... Or so she wanted to say, but she knew that it was impossible to become like him.

That's why she set a more realistic goal.

"I guess I'd pick Kain-san."

"Kain-san?"

"Who the heck is that?"

Fii replied.

"You know, he's the one that's always hiding in the treetops, and who for some reason always hides his mouth. He's really kind."

"Hidings in the treetops?"

"He hides his face?"

"Is that really a knight...?"

Apparently nobody knew about him. Even though Captain York, Crow-san, Orbull-san and Palwick-san were so famous...

"Muu, he's so really cool though..."

Fii puffed her cheeks unhappily and swore that she would one day make Kain-san known to them.

While the the boys chatted about this and that, they headed towards the lower parts of town.

It wasn't rare for them to wander about here, and some of the familiar shopkeepers waved to them.

About thirty percent of the apprentice knights were from noble families, while seventy percent were commoners. Well, commoners are people with dubious backgrounds like Fii.

Out of the people Fii was close to, it was Doug and Remié that were nobles.

Gorms, Slad and Gheith were from Lowtown.

Perhaps because commoners formed the majority, the apprentice knights most frequented Lowtown. It was most appropriate for their salary as well, so even

the apprentices from noble backgrounds became used to it.

But well, once they got a little older like Crow-san, and their salaries increased a little, many would start going to more mature stores though.

Anyway, although they were heading to Lowtown today, their destination was a little different this time.

Fii suddenly realised that she hadn't asked where they were going.

She had thought for sure that they'd be shopping or something, but they were headed in a different direction to the shopping district.

"Hey, where are we going by the way?"

The boys replied.

"Aah, did we not mention? Today we're all going to the sauna."

"It's a bit lonely just bathing everyday, yanno?"

"Recently this cheap place appeared, so we all decided to go."

Sauna...

In other words, taking off your clothes, entering a room filled with steam, and sweating your body clean...

And, very obviously, something that everyone entered together...

Dear midoriha-san,

Nice to meet you!

Thank you for reading my story.

I also have trouble figuring out the ships while writing it, so I'm glad that you're enjoying yourself.

Also, thank you for the wonderful picture.

Kain carrying Fii in a princess carry. It's terribly cute.

I hope that you'll continue to enjoy my story.

– Otakude Neet

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 76

Chapter 76

Fii was in trouble now.

And of course. It was impossible to enter the sauna with them and not have her sex revealed. She had really gotten careless.

Fii had to break out of his somehow.

(I'll use Doug, and then find a natural excuse to go home...)

Thinking this, she turned towards Doug, but found him blue in the face, opening and closing his mouth as he shook his head in a great panic.

(Why is he more panicked than me...)

He was being so obvious with his dismay that Fii could even hear him muttering "What do I do? What do I do?"

Before anybody noticed, Fii struck her elbow into his side, and whispered at him to compose himself.

Her voice finally calmed him down, and he nodded repeatedly in understanding.

Although he was still sweating everywhere, and his eyes were wider than usual, at the very least it wasn't as obvious as before.

For now, Doug had settled down.

Fii now understood painfully well that she couldn't rely on Doug. His honest personality made him easy to manipulate, but he was useless in any complex plans that required lying.

While calming him down, Fii concluded that she had to break out of his crisis

with her own strength.

To be honest, she wanted to go too.

Fii had only used a sauna a few times before, but it was more relaxing than bathing in cold water, and it was better for fatigue too.

In that case, she could just go later. Perhaps it might not be bad to go with just Doug.

“Speaking of which, there’s a book I want. Can we stop by the bookstore?” asked one of the members.

“Yeah, sounds good. We still have plenty of time.”

It was around 5 right now.

The apprentices didn’t have a curfew, but if they stayed out too late they would get an earful from their instructor. Normally it would be better to get back before the dining hall closed at 9.

Leaving the dirt-paved road of Lowtown, they entered a back lane between the mess of wooden houses.

The area looked similar to the dangerous place Fii went to with Conrad-san, but the atmosphere was totally different.

The voices of children and women came from houses and street corners, and she could hear the sound of hawkers in shops. The whole place was lively and cheerful.

This was where Slad and Gheith had grown up.

Since they knew the place well, they smoothly navigated the labyrinthine paths without a worry.

To Fii, Doug, Remié and the like, although they had come along often, they still weren’t too familiar with the streets. Because of that, they simply obediently followed those who had grown up here.

After making a number of turns, an old wooden building was visible at the end of a small path.

Its merchandise comprised worn out old books, and simple booklets made from paper and glue.

The booklets were like the halfway mark between hastily made newspapers and properly printed books. Those who grew up here called them ‘scraplets’, and

they were apparently well acquainted.

The older books were placed further inside, while scraplets lined the front of the store.

A white-haired old man owned the place.

“Oh, found it, found it. It’s this, it’s this,” cried the boy who wanted to come here.

He had immediately looked over the scraplets, and happily picked one out from there.

“More of these silly scraplets? Read a proper book for once,” scolded the old man.

“What’s your problem. You’re the one who sells them. And I even brought a bunch of knight friends to a shop like this. Geez, be thankful once in a while,” grumbled the boy.

Apparently the two were acquainted.

“Oohh, welcome to my humble shop. It’s small, and only sells second hand books, but please have a look,” bowed the old man when he noticed the aristocrat apprentice knights.

Perhaps because of her appearance, he mistook Fii for a noble as well. Officially she was just a commoner though. Still, nobody bothered correcting him, so Fii didn’t care either. She wasn’t exactly a noble, but royalty was very similar.

“Keh! I’m your regular, but look at how you treat me.”

“What I really want to sell are just these old books. People who read nothing but those vulgar scraplets aren’t real customers.”

“Shaddap! It’s these damned scraplets that you’re living on!”

Although their words were harsh, everyone could tell they were close, so everybody ignored them and browsed the books.

It was at places like these that a person’s tastes would really show. Slad and the other Lowtown apprentices were looking at nothing but scraplets. Most of the commoner boys from other areas were the same.

Remié and Doug were more interested in the old books. The two of them just seemed better bred.

Remié liked a lot of things, so he had a look at cooking books and various novels, but Doug was looking at nothing but novels about knights.

Gorms looked at both the scraplets and the books. When he did look at the books, they were mostly things like books on military history, or tricks to strengthening your body.

Since Fii didn't have any particular tastes, she just went to see if they sold the books that the Captain and the others at the 18th recommended to her.

After browsing for about half an hour and talking to the shopkeeper, in the end it was only the first boy, Slad, and Remié that bought anything.

They felt a little apologetic, but the old shopkeeper didn't seem to mind. He saw them off with a smile.

They had been rather welcomed.

"What did you buy?" Fii asked Remié.

It turns out he had bought a book on embroidery. He liked plush toys, but was too embarrassed to buy them. Apparently making them himself was his new goal.

(Looks like he'll be last on the rankings as well, this time.)

As for Slad, he had apparently bought the new instalment of some action story.

Speaking of which, his room had a lot of these scraplets. Scraplets were only held together with glue, so it didn't take long for them to fall apart. But Slad took care of him, and the old scraplets on his shelf were still pristine and readable.

"Is it interesting?"

"Yeah, it's super interesting. Want me to lend you the series?"

"Yeah. Please."

As for what the first boy had bought——

"What the heck..."

"It's a book with rumours and occult stories from different countries!"

Just a look at his scraplet was enough to see all kinds of suspicious lines.

『Suspicious regarding the circumstances of Prince Domash's accidental death! It was no accident, it was an assassination!』

『A mysterious person who appears on street corners. The truth behind Balsmashshootman!』

『Unloved by the King, and locked in the inner palace! The grudge that drives the vengeful spirit of the second queen to roam the Capital each night!』

A glance was enough to tell that they were all incredibly fake-looking. But the boys all read through it with sparkling eyes.

“Oooh! Amazing! They’ve apparently confirmed the existence of a mysterious giant creature in Borden Lake!”

“Ooohh! That one that people have been talking about?”

“In other words they’re f-, finally planning to capture it!?”

“Yeah. Apparently the survey team is recruiting people right now. And apparently amongst the members is the legendary hunter, Luvisess as well!”

“UOHHHHH! I WANNA JOIN TOO!”

Fii had a look and listened in, but when she saw the boys getting engrossed over obviously fake stories, she couldn’t help but feel astounded. Fii now understood how the old shopkeeper felt a little.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 77

Chapter 77

In the end, Fii ended up at the sauna without any ideas.

The problem hadn't changed from an hour ago.

At this rate, she would have to enter the sauna with everyone else.

Not only that, but Doug was reaching the limits of his composure.

"What's wrong, Doug? You're all fidgety. Haha, are you looking forward to the sauna that much?" asked a carefree Slad.

"M-... Mn..." nodded Doug with a pale face.

It was fine since everyone here was dull, but someone sharp like Conrad-san would have seen through with a glance.

At any rate, this crowd of relaxed boys could finally see the sauna, and the smoke rising from its chimney.

It was a large-ish wooden building, and quite a number of guests were coming and going.

There were two entrances, and signs above them labelled them as men's and women's. Apparently they were separated by sex. But that didn't help Fii at all right now.

Before long, they arrived in front of the sauna.

"Phew~ We're finally here."

"I'm looking forward to it."

The boys all wore expectant and relaxed expressions.

Fii had to come up with some reason to avoid entering the sauna. Sickness? No, that cause trouble in the future. But suddenly remembering some errand would be a little too unnatural...

At that moment, before everyone's eyes, a young boy and his mother walked into the women's sauna.

One of the apprentice knights came up with a good joke, and turned to Fii.

"Isn't that great, Heath. You can still go into the women's sauna. Guys under eleven are allowed in!"

Fii's age was about the same as his.

In other words, if Fii lied about her age, she could still enter without a problem. That was the idea.

And of course, he was also teasing her because of her girly face.

"Oi, oi, peeping is no good, ain't it."

"Whoa, whoa, he'd just be entering from the front. That's not peeking. You could even call it manly to stroll in boldly for a look at the women!" declared the boy who had first teased Fii.

But despite his joking tone, Fii pretended to think seriously for a moment, before looking at him in the eyes and answering,

"Yeah, you're right. I'll go have a look."

"Eh...?"

Time stopped for the apprentice boys.

Gorms, Slad, everyone as they stared at Fii's face as though they couldn't believe their ears.

Leaving the frozen boys aside, Fii kept her serious expression as she took off her apprentice knight's jacket, and handed it to her friends.

"If I wear my jacket in, even I'll get busted, so take care of it for me. Well then, I'm going in."

With that, Fii strode briskly towards the door to the women's sauna.

"O-, Oi...!"

Gorms hurriedly tried to stop her, but Fii turned around with a serious expression and held a finger to her lips.

Don't cause a fuss. They'll find out.

The boys all heard Heath's voice.

An apprentice knight stormed into the women's sauna. The public would find that out.

Everyone understood how grave it would be.

The women's sauna.

There was no boy who wasn't fascinated by its allure, but at the same time, it was a sacred and dangerous land that they could never step foot into.

And right now, their comrade Heath, was clearly walking towards it.

Considering the backlash, causing a fuss would be bad. Really, really bad.

But wouldn't failing to stop Heath be even more bad...?

While the boys were sewn to the ground by their confusion, Heath began walking again.

Towards the door to the women's sauna.

With brisk, natural steps, as though Heath was doing nothing wrong at all, Heath casually opened the door, and then walked right in. Heath disappeared from their sight.

Into the women's sauna...

With the exception of one person, everyone had broken out into a cold sweat at what just happened, their eyes wide open and still dumbfounded by the scene.

Their hearts seemed to pound furiously in their chests...

Pounding from the shock of what just happened, and the fear of the uproar that was to come...

But strangely, they were met with silence.

An boy, who was an apprentice knight of all things, just walked into the women's sauna. It should have been a massive scandal that shook the world. But even after Heath disappeared into the sauna, nothing had happened. Nothing had happened at all.

And as though truly nothing had happened, time seemed to flow again, as the boys returned to the calm evening street.

“H-, He went...?”

“That guy... seriously went...”

“And he even went so casually...”

They boys felt like they had seen some illusion.
But it was reality. Heath had gone into the women’s sauna.
Boldly, from the front... and so casually...

And the fact that nothing at all had happened meant that Heath’s infiltration had succeeded...

Since the passer-bys began looking at them suspiciously, the boys flusteredly removed their gazes from the door to the women’s sauna.
A group of proud knights had very nearly been treated like perverts.

Without even heading to the men’s sauna, they just stood there as their eyes wandered randomly, and fidgeted about.

They were searching all around them.
Searching for the figure of that small apprentice knight boy.

And then they came to a conclusion.
That small boy was nowhere to be seen.

In other words, what had happened just now truly was reality...

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 78

Chapter 78

Fii left the boys behind and walked into the sauna for women.

Having taken off her jacket already, she was now dressed in a black top made from weaved fabric, and long white pants.

The way she looked now was somewhere between a girlish boy, and a boyish girl. And she was obviously a boyish girl to the people around her, since she had now entered the women's sauna. Not a single person suspected her.

And of course, she truly was a boyish-dressed girl. All she did was head in through the door she was naturally supposed to use.

She opened the door like natural, and she headed inside like natural. When she came through the door, there was a place to pay her fee, and then a dressing room connected to it.

The moment she step foot in this room, Fii tweaked her hair a little. She quickly pulled down some sparse the hair on the side of her head. It was just long enough to reach her neck, and she covered her white cheeks with it after bringing it to the front.

Suddenly her image seemed to change.

The remaining bits of boyishness vanished, and her face seemed even more girly now.

In fact, her hair actually had two layers. Normally you would only see the layer cut to cheek length that gave her a boyish impression. But besides that, she had some sparse, but long hair, that reached

as far as her neck.

It was usually kept brushed back to hide, and Fii normally kept this hair tied with a string.

But by untying it and having it fall to her sides of her face, Fii had a simple way of changing her image.

It was at the advice of Conrad-san that she had gotten her hair cut this way.

And thus, her messy boy's hair could be turned into a girl's with just a little combing with her fingers.

Even the woman at the fee booth showed no signs of suspicion, and simply handed over a towel after receiving the money.

There was nobody who questioned her in the changing room either. And naturally so. Why would anybody blame a girl for using the women's sauna.

Taking off her clothes, Fii gave herself a quick rinse to get rid of the sweat from her training, before enjoying the sauna to the fullest.

Here, she could relax without worrying about the eyes of others. It was hot, and she was sweating everywhere, but it was bliss.

After leisurely enjoying the sauna, she gave herself one last rinse before tidying her hair and leaving...

The apprentice knight boys were already waiting outside. Since their hair was wet, they must have entered too. She had really enjoyed herself, so perhaps she had taken a bit too long. Fii felt a little apologetic towards them.

The boys had been glancing at the women's sauna door the whole time. Averting their eyes, and yet paying close attention. Their cheeks were a little red.

"I'm backk~"

Fii quickly headed over to them.

When they saw how Fii walked out of there like it was nothing, all of their eyes went wide. Doug was the only one who knew the circumstances, but Fii had made sure to silence him with her eyes. Doug nodded up and down, of course.

The moment she took jacket back, the boys began crying out in unrest.

“D-, Did you really go inside...!?”

“To the women’s sauna...!”

“Yeah,” she confirmed, “I took my time and really enjoyed it. Sorry for taking so long though.”

Enjoyed...

The moment they heard this word, all the boys gulped as they blushed redder. Fii only meant that she had enjoyed the heat and sweating though; certainly different from the boy’s expectations.

For a while, the boys exchanged glances and the silence continued until one boy couldn’t hold on any longer.

“So... how was it...? Heath...! The... The women’s sauna...!”

Fii went thought silently for a moment, and realised why they were asking that. Holding her chin in her fingers, she gave a terribly meaningful smile, before flashing them a silent grin.

In that moment, the boys realised it.

That today, their comrade Heath, had reached a summit that none of them had ever seen.

Of course, what really happened was that she simply went into the sauna. Nothing particularly exciting had happened at all. Fii had no interest in what the boys probably wanted to see, so she had simply enjoyed the sauna.

But, in the minds of these young boys, Fii was a man who had stepped foot into a world none of them knew. Only Doug who knew the circumstances looked away with a blushing, yet astounded face, but it didn’t take long before Fii silenced him with yet another glance.

The boys idealised and were fascinated by the women’s sauna. So when Fii had stepped into it, and even returned without harm, those feelings transformed into respect, or perhaps fear towards her.

“Well then, shall we head back?”

she spoke refreshingly. Her back showered by the boys’ gazes of admiration, Fii walked back comfortable to the castle having enjoyed her evening at the sauna.

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The next day, Fii received over 2000 points from the members who went to the sauna. Because of that, she shot up to 3rd place in one go.

It was still a long way from 1st place Zerius who was already at 4000 points, but her incredible speed of ascension had caused her to be the talk of the dorm.

However, every one of those entries had their explanation left blank. And no matter who asked, none of those boys would ever explain the reason.

Because of this, the rumour that Heath had definitely done something dirty again, began to spread amongst the apprentice knights.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 79

Chapter 79 – Roy and Fiiru

Not edited

In the Orstollian royal palace stood a room for the royal husband and wife. Because there was only one entrance and exit, and many smaller partitioned rooms lay inside it, the set-up was like a house within the castle.

In one of those smaller rooms sat a long table, large enough to sit twenty people, but in contrast there were only two chairs.

At one end of the table sat a girl with her head down, polishing something in her hands.

It was a small and plain, white porcelain cup. The cup was well-made, drawing smooth and beautiful contours in her hand.

Holding it carefully in her hands, she was using a clean white cloth to carefully polish away any possible blemishes.

“Fiiru-sama, High Majesty Roy will be here soon.”

The girl raised her head at Lynette’s words. Her lovely golden hair shifted as she did, and her beautiful blue eyes gazed the maid’s way.

So beautiful was the girl that even Lynette who had grown up with her found herself sighing.

Her eyes, her nose, her mouth... Everything part that composed her face was delicate and beautifully arranged. But instead of the cold beauty one would expect from a doll, her eyes turned down in a way that exuded a kind and gentle

impression.

Although she was beautiful enough to outshine even other princesses famed for their beauty, she shared the child-like atmosphere that her older sister had, which attracted men all the more.

It was little wonder that the royalty in Déman's vicinity had been obsessed with her.

Fiiru met Lynette's gaze and gave a nod.

"I know. Lynette, could you pour some tea for His Majesty and I?"

"Yes. In the same cup as always?"

"Yes, please."

Fiiru's voice was a little frail, but also clear and gentle.

Upon hearing Fiiru's request, Lynette carefully poured tea into the polished cup.

Fiiru simply watched the tea pour in.

Normally you would heat the tea cup in advance, but because of Fiiru's unwillingness to part with it Lynette had chosen a tea that was delicious lukewarm.

Light-brown tea layered over the white of the porcelain.

After that, Lynette moved to the other side of the table and placed a warmed cup down in front of the King's seat, this time pouring hot tea.

"Thank you, Lynette," thanked Fiiru with a smile.

It wasn't long before they heard footsteps coming down the whole.

Brisk footsteps that seemed hurried as usual.

The knight from the 1st Division who had been stationed in front of the door now received a signal from another knight outside. With that, he opened the door.

"Sorry for keeping you waiting."

Beyond the door came an apology, and a man with it.

A handsome black-haired man, with blue-grey eyes and a cleverness to his face. It was Roy, the king of this nation.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 80

Chapter 80

Unedited

Roy, King of Orstoll, entered the room, and Fiiru stood up to bow.

“Good evening, Your Majesty Roy. Lynette has prepared some tea. Please have some if it pleases you.”

“I see. Thank you,” he said as he removed his jacket and tossed it to some nearby shelf.

Lynette's brows furrowed as she ran over to straighten it out and place it on a hanger.

When she was done she ran into the kitchen to bring dinner for the King and Queen.

Lynette returned with a cart with the food on it. As it was no more plentiful than your average dinner it seemed a little scarce for a royal couple's meal. Still, Roy paid it no mind and spoke to Fiiru instead.

“How has life in Orstoll been? If there has been anything unsatisfactory, please say.”

“No, you have treated me very well, Your Majesty. There is nothing unsatisfactory.”

The tone that Roy used to speak to her sounded a little gentler than his normal speech, and he used this tone to apologise once again.

“I am terribly sorry for essentially confining you here.”

“I am very grateful for your help. I could not hope for anything more.”

But after that, Fiiru spoke to him a little hesitantly.

“Umm... but... if possible, I would like to meet with Fii-neesama.”

“Impossible.”

Roy’s rejection was immediate.

“Why...!?”

Roy replied calmly to her sad cry.

“There is no proof that your sister was uninvolved. As long as I cannot decisively rule out the possibility, I cannot allow you to come into contact with her.”

“My sister isn’t that kind of person!”

“Exactly. Fii-sama would never do such a thing!”

Even Lynette the maid spoke out above her station to refute Roy. However, Roy did not chastise her, and instead replied to the two with his ever calm voice.

“I have said it before. I will doubt everybody. With regards to this case, I will trust nobody except you, Lynette, and my most trustworthy retainers. Even your sister is no exception. For the sake of your safety, I intend to be as careful as humanly possible.”

“But...!”

When Fiiru continued to argue, Roy’s gaze began to grow sharp. A dark aura seemed to seep out of him.

“I will say it once again. No matter how much you or Lynette may trust them, I have no absolutely no intention of doing the same. To begin with, I recall you leaving all facets of this investigation to me, did you not?”

Fiiru couldn’t help but tremble under his glare.

As Lynette watched this, she had a thought.

(I don’t think he realises at all...)

It was probably unintentional. The way this king glared at others.

(Even though he's scaring Fiiru-sama like this...)

Fiiru-sama was blessed with knowledge and wisdom, but she was not particularly blessed with courage. Frankly, she leant towards timidity and cowardice.

It went without saying that a grown man's glare was enough to frighten her.

Even so, it was within her nature to try her best to overcome her fear, but this man alone was too much for her to handle.

After all, he was the monarch of the great nation of Orstoll, and the man known as the Ice King.

And upon considering her current position...

Fiiru had no path except to hang her head in dejection and apologise.

"My sincere apologies. I should be thanking you in gratitude for your help, not... I said too much..."

It was only at this point did Roy seem to have an inkling that he had scared her. The sternness on his expression was replaced by the mask of calm, and he replied to her in a gentler voice than usual.

"No, I should be apologising for speaking so severely. But as I've said, I want to limit contact as much as possible to those who aren't absolutely trustworthy. Please bear with it for now."

"Yes..."

After gazing at her crestfallen expression, Roy spoke to her seriously.

"Princess Fiiru. I promised Prince Tomáš that I would absolutely protect you. And we are by no means in a situation where we can let our guards down. Even so, I still want to make your time in this country as pleasant as possible."

With that, Roy took a sip of Lynette's tea before leaving his chair.

"Apologies, but I still have work left over so I will be heading to the study. I'm still busy, you see."

"Yes. Thank you very much for coming tonight."

Fiiru once again bowed to him.

“Um, what will Your Majesty be eating for dinner...?”

“Just this will do.”

Roy responded to Lynette as he took just one dish from the cart. After that he holed himself in the study as usual.

Lynette was unable to tell Fiiru about how Fii was being treated. It was because the only thing it would achieve right now would be piling on another worry.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 81

Chapter 81 – Northern-Eastern Swordsmanship Competition

Fii frowned deeply at Doug.

“You’ve got guts, Doug!”

Standing five metres away, she pointed her wooden sword at him. Considering her short reach, it was far from her contact range. An attack from here was impossible.

The location was the outdoors apprentice knight training grounds, and the pair were currently in the midst of a mock battle.

Standing around them were other apprentice knights, exchanging fierce blows. Well, not Fii and Doug though. The pair were not exchanging a thing.

“Doug!”

A troubled expression appeared on his face.

The reason that Fii had been angry all this time was not because he had hit her. It was the opposite in fact; Doug had not attacked even once.

The moment that the irritated Fii took a step forward, Doug hopped another three steps back.

Fii’s frown further deepened.

“Damn it, Doug! I told you to take this seriously!”

Normally Fii preferred a docile Doug for the sake of protecting her secret. However, mock battles were a different story.

If Doug didn’t take this more seriously, it would only disadvantage them both.

But despite that...

When Fii tried to break the gap again, this time Doug leapt to the left. The power in his legs were incredible, and the distance between them widened once again.

“URGHHHHHH!”

Although Fii stamped her feet in vexation, Doug simply maintained that troubled countenance as he watched her from far away. His sword was still held loosely by his side, and he showed no signs of going on the offensive. Despite still being close enough to attack, as he had demonstrated in his battle with Gorms.

The whole mock battle had been like this. Ever since she had partnered with Doug, not once had Doug attacked her. Not a single time.

The truth was that the gap between their abilities was immense. Fii knew this too. If Doug ever took this seriously, Fii would be defeated in the blink of an eye, without any chance to retaliate.

In fact, Fii and Doug fought in similar ways. They were fighters who made use of their agility to avoid enemy strikes as they attacked.

But their ability was completely different. Fii was certainly a natural jumper, but that was only for a girl. It was unlikely that her pure muscle power could match a boy's. The main advantage that her body held was its natural lightness. Because of that lightness, not only could she perform feats of agility with her meagre power, it was also easier to change the direction of her movements, giving birth to an irregular and unpredictable fighting style.

On the other hand, despite Doug's slenderness, he was still the height of the average apprentice knight. And as aspiring knights, these boys were far from short.

Also, despite being so slender, he was heavier than boys his height. His thin

frame was incredibly muscular.

By making use of that sinewy, muscular body, Doug could perform the same feats of agility that Fii did. Not only that, but faster.

That disparity in speed made all the difference.

Just the speed of his first leaps were much faster than Fii's, and using his muscles to run brought his final velocity to a level beyond compare.

Not only that, but the strikes backed by the momentum of his speed and mass were powerful enough to topple even Gorms.

Doug was simply a monster.

Doug was like an upgraded, 'Holy shit, what is that guy!' version of Fii. It was impossible for her to win.

Still, in the five battles they had, the score was five draws. And the reason for that was because Doug would never, ever attack her. Doug who took down any other knight in five seconds, with the exception of Gorms who could hold on for a praiseworthy thirty. Doug, legendary in the Northern Dormitory for his record of being undefeated and invincible, for some reason held back for Fii alone.

At first Fii had assumed that he was afraid of being scolded, so she ordered him to attack. Unfortunately she was met with the same result. She told him before the match to attack her, but was met with the same result. She told him during the match to attack her, but was met with the same result. It was only during Doug's matches with Fii that he would run about with that awkward expression on his face.

As mentioned previously, not only was Doug's initial speed higher than hers, so was his final speed.

In other words, no matter what Fii did, it was impossible for her to catch him.

As a result, these matches between them would always end with a game of tag between a furious Fii chasing and ordering him to fight and Doug who was intent on running and avoiding her.

"DOUUUUGG! DOUUUUUUGGGG! WHYYYYYYYYYYYY!"

Today as well, Fii ended up red-faced and gasping for breath, having completely failed to catch him.

And although Doug looked at her apologetically, he made sure to stay out of the reach of her sword.

At that moment, an unfamiliar laugh appeared on the training ground.

“Hahahahahaha, is this really their training grounds? It looks more like a ballroom filled with bad dancing. Are you guys really practising the sword?”

“I’d heard that the Northern Dormitory had bad standards, but this is even worse than I imagined. Heh.”

Everyone turned to the sudden laughter and found five unfamiliar boys standing there.

And for one of those boys, the first thought these boys of the Northern Dormitory had was,

(Mushroom...?)

A boy with an inflated brown mushroom for his hair and a blonde, long-haired youth were standing there openly mocking them.

I'll Live My Second Life! - Chapter 82

Chapter 82

(unedited)

When Fii turned towards the voices, she found five unfamiliar boys standing there, overlooking the training grounds.

And out of the five of them, the mushroom-haired boy and the long-haired boy were very clearly making fools of them.

This caused a lot of the apprentice knights to grow noisy.

Looking at the mushroom boy, some of the apprentices exclaimed, "That's Rizil! Ever since he joined the Quinzy dojo, everyone's called him a genius!"

"Last year he was top 4 in the Orstollian Youth Swordsmanship Competition!"

Upon looking at the long-haired boy, a different group of youths exclaimed, "What, the one next to him was the runner up, Luca!"

"The son of the Coyil Viscounty famous for its knights...!?"

Upon checking the other newcomers, the conversation grew even more heated.

"That's Kerio, the best student of my dojo!"

"And there's Jerid... Glen too... All of them were in the top 8 in last year's competition..."

"What are they even here for...?"

Furthermore, all of these boys had been winners during this year's entrance

exam.

In other words, out of the twelve winners, five of them were standing right there.

Having seen her the disquiet amongst her fellow dormmates, Fii moved to Gorms' side and voiced her thoughts.

"Hey, hey, what kind of competition is the 'Orstollian Youth Swordsmanship Competition'?"

"A competition that pretty much all the boys of all the every dojo, as well as all the noble kids following the path of the sword, will take part in. It's considered the way to definitively decide the best swordsman in the land."

"Woow!"

It sounded pretty amazing. Fii was even more curious now.

"Did you participate too, Gorms?"

"My dojo forbids competition. I wanted to try it, but I couldn't."

"I seee~"

Although pretty much every dojo participated, apparently not every one did without exception.

Fii supposed that each dojo had its own rules and traits.

"Did you, Doug?"

Doug shook his head.

"My master and all his disciples lived in the mountains."

It seemed that despite being a noble, Doug grew up on a mountain. But then his master was a former noble, and Doug had grown up on his family estate prior to that, so he had already learnt the bearings of a noble.

"Carnegith-senpai was right," sneered the long-haired Luca, "The Northern Dormitory really is a collection of losers."

Next to him, Rizil gave an affected shrug before adding fuel to the flame.

"C'mon, don't be so straight with them. I'm sure even these guys have a bit of pride."

“You have a point.”

Luca combed his hair back foppishly.

Suddenly, Fii realised she had heard his name before.

It was that boy that the maids had said was both similar to Crow, and completely different.

As for Fii’s conclusion———

(They’re totally different!)

Despite their outrage at the boys’ words, the apprentice knights of the Northern Dormitory made no move, perhaps because of their fame. But Gorms stepped forward, arms crossed, and spoke.

“Sure are running your mouths.”

Perhaps the old Gorms would have been angry, but right now he simply looked at them with one eye closed, completely calm.

“So you’re Gorms from the Sarthik Dojo. They say that you’re strong, but you can only think that because none of you compete. You didn’t make it into our dorm. Isn’t that proof?” mocked the blonde.

“Wanna try us?” challenged the mushroom with a mocking smile.

Still, Gorms wasn’t provoked, and replied with a calm, “One day.”

Rizil the mushroom scoffed, while the long-haired Luca thrust his finger conceitedly at Doug.

“And Doug! I saw you just now! What the fuck was that supposed to be. It’s fine that you moved into the Northern Dorm because there was someone you had to fight, but you look awfully used to this hole of a dorm! You’re like a wolf without its claws and fangs! You’re like a dog!”

Fii grew angry.

“How dare you treat Doug like a dog! Take that back!”

(You’re one to talk...) thought every member of her dorm.

Luca narrowed his eyes.

“Who the hell are you...?”

“I’m Doug’s friend, Heath! I won’t let you make fun of Doug!”

The opinions of her dormmates aside, Fii really was rather mad. Their relationship hadn’t begun as a pure one, but Fii still considered Doug as one of her more important friends. And as for Luca, her opinion of him had gone from ‘totally different’, to ‘totally, totally, totally different’.

In response to Fii’s words, Luca smiled and dropped his stance a little. An instant later and he was standing right in front of her.

(So fast...! Well, still slower than Doug though...!)

Fii’s eyes were wide as Luka held her chin and then drew her face near.

“It’s not a bad thing to have energy but if you’re too energetic this cute face of yours might just get hurt.”

“Stop...!”

Yet another instant later, Doug had broken in between them to shield her.

“Heh. Wanna go? The way you are now I’ll have no problem beating you,” Luca responded.

As the two boys glared at each other, a voice sounded from behind.

“Luca, Rizilm cut it out. We didn’t come here to pick a fight with them,” said a black-haired, bespectacled boy.

Yet again, the boys of the Northern Dormitory were thrown into a frenzy.

“That’s Percil! The three-time consecutive winner of the Youth Swordsmanship Competition!”

“Are you kidding me...!”

Fii glared at him.

“Then what did you come here for?”

Percil was unflinching however, and replied calmly, “Allow me to apologise for the rudeness of my group. We are apprentice knights from the Eastern

Dormitory. The reason we have come is to pass on a message.”

“A message...?”

All of the Northern apprentices seemed confused.

Luka scoffed at them and held out a piece of paper.

“We’re here to tell you lot about the Northern-Eastern Swordsmanship Competition!” he declared.

“The Northern-Eastern Swordsmanship Competition...?” echoed Fii.

Percil nodded.

“Indeed. Three weeks from now there will be mock battles between the members of the Northern and Eastern Dormitories. It will be conducted as a competition and each dorm will elect five members each. Please make sure to prepare.”

“Struggle as much as you like.”

“The knight captains of each division will be coming to watch. Try not to embarrass us.”

With that, the three boys left the paper and left the Northern Dormitory’s training grounds.